

GUIMO'

WALTER ELWOOD

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GUIMÓ



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By
Walter Elwood



Frontispiece by
Grant Tyson Reynard

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LOAN STACK

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GUIMÓ

CHAPTER I

THE SINKING SKY



ADRE! Padre Fernando!" It was the gentle voice of little brown-skinned Juanito, who took as good and faithful care of his master as a black-tongued Chinese dog.

"Well, Juanito, why do you pipe so?" asked the white-robed friar, pausing in his restive tramping to and fro.

"The girl Margarita, Padre; she sits outside on the stairway. She bids me ask you if the sky is still sinking."

"Still sinking!" muttered the boyish friar. "You go outside the door and wait."

An appealing frown that was a kind of prayer in itself knitted the brow of the boyish dreamer in the white vestments and told the whole story of exiled youth and escaping visions.

"Still sinking!" murmured Fernando again as he took up his feverish tramping. As he strode past the first open window, he rested his nerv-

ously-moving hand on the diamond-paned panels of translucent conch shell. But as he stood gazing out over the small square plaza buried desolately in growths of the sharp-bladed *zacate*,* his eyes were as the eyes of the blind. His eyes were blind, too, to the Sulu Sea whose waves after the typhoon still cannonaded the white beach crawling along the dreary edge of the plaza. And his eyes were blind to the crimson rim of the Oriental sun sinking so swiftly into the distant shining water.

“Another day,” he muttered, “of an endless world of days.”

Restlessly he strode to a second broad window. But here he took no notice of the fluttering whirl of the wings of bats elfishly dropping from their sleeping crannies in the overhanging thatch. He took no notice of the barbarous rising and falling of bargainners’ voices in the market place. He was deaf to the falsetto laughter of a *tuba*† drinker.

At the third window, he looked out straight into the fire tree’s foliage, as exquisite as the lace of a priceless altar piece. But he could not hear the neighing of his pony tethered at the foot of the fire tree.

Again, beside the fourth window he paused blindly. He did not see the little hip-roofed, palm-thatched houses snuggling under the towering cocoanut palms, under the creaking clumps of plumelike bamboos, under the black globular

*A forage grass. †The fermented juice of the cocoanut palm.

mango trees. He did not hear the thrum of guitar and banduria* and the pathos-laden songs of his Filipino children.

What his brooding eyes saw as they peered those thousands and thousands of miles through the dusk was light streaming from the many windows of his father's chateau. His father's chateau near La Granja, the summer palace of the kings of Spain — far-away Spain! He saw the light streaming and heard the band play stirring airs from *The Barber of Seville*. He heard the rumble of wheels as his father's landau drew into the square where the band was playing. Then, in a flash, he was hearing the tinkling and the splashing of the hundred fountains of La Granja, the hundred fountains in the groves of the summer palace.

“And here I am — in the land of the Filipinos — and here the old reaper will get me.”

He shuddered and his missal dropped on the burnished floor. As he picked it up, he smiled wryly at his own absorption. His warm, strong hands, never resting, had made of the small book a twisted, wrinkled handful of paper.

“Yes, the sky is still sinking,” he sighed, “and it's getting ready to do its crushing of me.” Unconsciously, his hand went upward as though it would touch the glowing, palpitating evening stars.

Scores of torches were flashing and moving

*A guitar-like musical instrument.

amid the din of the market place. The boyish friar watched the moving torches and thought long, deep thoughts of his brown-bodied, luminous-eyed folk in their warm-breathed Oriental land, of their unconcern and their joy of life in the one world they were sure of. They cheerfully replied in kind to the warm sensuous murmur of the sea, to the mysterious scented winds dancing down from the wooded mountains, to the seductive music of hempen strings, to the inaudible call of eyes. The slender boy in the white robes thought of these things and of the heart-breaking, vision-killing loneliness of his two years in Majayjay.*

Now there broke into his reverie little Juanito with both brown hands firmly clasping the trimmed and burning lamp which he set very importantly on the massive *ipil* table in the center of the spacious *sala*. The light dazzled the eyes of the dreamer and Juanito had again swung shut the heavy door before the quizzically smiling Margarita became visible. There she stood, her brown shoulders lifted and thrust forward wonderingly, her rounded brown arms gleaming through the transparent bell-like sleeves of her finest hemp thread *camisa*.†

“ The sky isn’t falling now, is it, Fernando? ” she asked in her musical dialect. “ It would not fall on us, anyway, for the big volcano and the *cordillera* would hold it up and keep it from

*Pronounced Ma-hee’-hee.

†Waist.

crushing Majayjay. And no god wants Majayjay and Fernando and Margarita to be crushed.”

“What a blessed little pagan you are!”

“That is all the better, for — don’t you see? — in the sunlight I am a good Christian but when the great night falls I have to be a pagan. Then the air is full of spirits flying and I don’t want the witch-ghosts, the *asuangs*, to persecute me. You would be sorry if they carried me off my sleeping-mat some night and imprisoned me in the *baleti** tree of *Inauayan*.”

“Margarita,” playfully scolded the slender youth in front of her as he drummed nervously on the massive *ipil* table, “how am I going to get such notions out of your head?”

“How am I going to get them into *your* head, Fernando? In the day when the sun shines, you are my priest and say the mass so fervently. But when the night falls, you are only Fernando with no one to take your hand but me.”

“But God sees us and the Blessed Mother knows, little pagan.”

“Oh, they can’t see. I won’t let them. And would they care if I made you happy?” So saying, Margarita hastened in her little bare feet to the white-painted wall and closed the triptych. “Now the Blessed Virgin and the angels can rest.”

The girl with the luxuriant brown-black hair

*A tree with many intertwining trunks, like the banyan tree.

pattered across the broad burnished floor to the opposite wall and softly turned the Sacred Heart of Jesus toward the silent wall.

“ No one can look sorrowfully at us now, Fernando. Only I can see you, beautiful man from far away, so strong and yet so sad without me. And you — you can see me and that makes your eyes grow bright.”

“ But if I turn my back and look the other way? ”

“ You could not — you could not since I am the only one who can bring you rest, the only one who can keep you from hating our beautiful island. Oh, you are wrong when you say that the air so sweet with the *ilang-ilang** is poison.”

“ Margarita, what a child you are! ” smiled Fernando, walking toward her.

“ Child! Child! ” she cried reproachfully. “ I am not a child. I am the one who loves you and I love you because you are not like those who so unjustly sent my *tatai*† across the ocean to Ceuta in Africa and left me without any father. I forgive them because of you.”

“ Margarita,” answered Fernando with a touch of sadness, “ God sees. . . . God sees; so you must go away and not come to me any more. Do you want my God to cast me into the lake of fire? ”

“ No, no! ” cried the girl, her luminous eyes deeply troubled.

*A tree with very fragrant blossoms.

†Father.

“ I shall always be thinking of you, Margarita, as I go walking up and down this echoing old *sala*, day after day.”

Then the white-robed youth with burning eyes strode to the triptych and opened wide the panels and looked at the gentle Virgin seated upon her throne.

“ No, no,” pleaded Margarita, hastily swinging the panels shut again. “ Not to-night, Fernando. Not to-night. To-morrow.”

“ But to-night the angel with the flaming sword might come, Margarita.”

“ No, Fernando, no! Oh, my beloved one! ” She seized his warm strong hands and pressed them between her own and covered them with mute kisses as she sank at his feet.

A sudden loud tapping on the heavy door echoed through the great *sala*. The youth in the white robe and stole crept dreamily toward the tapping panel. With a dismal creak, the heavy door swung open and a lithe young tuba-gatherer dropped on one knee and kissed the outstretched hand of the boyish friar. Fernando watched a shudder sweep over those shapely brown arms, that brown, muscle-quivering torso, the strong, clean-moulded legs.

“ Padre,” begged the *managuite*,* “ come and see what the storm and the waves have brought in. Three things they have brought in and we of the *kalubihan*† are greatly terrified. Many

*Tuba-gatherer.

†Cocoanut grove.

people are hastening to the spot but they are afraid to draw near on account of the great strange light."

Padre Fernando took his broad-brimmed beaver hat and went out with the brown *managuete*.

"I can wait," sighed Margarita, peering out into the blackness of the corridor beyond the open door. The fanning of the wings of a dozen bats purred softly through the dark passageway. "I wonder," she thought to herself, "if the bats in Spain can fly so beautifully and so swiftly and never strike one's face even in the thickest darkness."

As Fernando and the tuba-gatherer went with quick footsteps down the town's main highway and thence down a cavern-like street to the sea, their path was lighted only by the tiny shafts of light shooting from a thousand cracks in palm-thatched houses. Then, all at once, they came upon a hundred men of Majayjay crowded together and waiting in the light of two or three madly flaring torches.

"Padre, Padre," said the tuba-gatherer almost in a whisper, "now you can see." He pointed toward the dusk-enfolded beach. "The light! The light!"

Padre Fernando's brow was knitted again from peering at the stranded mass which radiated that ghostly white light. From the very heart of the vast shapeless mass to the outmost edges, those who so anxiously watched saw the quivering light

escaping. For meters around, that strange phosphorescence brightened the night air.

“It must be the giant jellyfish of the world,” murmured the tuba-gatherer. “The storm drove it here; the tide left it; to-morrow the sun will dry it up.”

“And there’s something else beside it,” said Fernando, going forward.

“It is Canuto, the fisherman, the son of old Guadalupe, and yonder is his little *parao** with the sail torn off and the outrigger broken. The typhoon overtook him.”

A few feet from the stranded giant jellyfish the body of the young fisherman lay. Beside it there on the white sand Fernando halted. The night breeze heaving in from the Sulu Sea pierced him like wind from a snow-capped mountain. Canuto also had been young and strong and full of that song of life which is as wide as the universe. But here he lay in the great sleep. From his motionless body and immobile limbs emanated the same unearthly, palpitating light which made horrid that stretch of beach by the *kalubihan*.

“We are afraid to touch him,” whispered the tuba-gatherer, “and to carry him to his mother’s house.”

“You told me that fishermen never drown,” said Padre Fernando, still shivering in the warm night breeze.

“He did not drown,” explained the tuba-

*A light sailboat.

gatherer. "When the wind broke his little *parao* and overturned it, he clung to it, knowing that it could not sink. But the wind, not knowing, drove him into this monster jellyfish. It, too, like everything else, was struggling for its life. Yet, with its thousands of tiny stinging spears, it killed him, paralyzed him just the way it does the little fishes. It's a bad death, Padre. The unlucky one's muscles twitch and harden and nearly tear him to pieces."

"O God of the tropical seas," prayed the boyish friar, "you have shown me the warning light."

Though the seemingly ice-laden wind still penetrated, Fernando bent down and lifted the phosphorus-painted shoulders of the young fisherman. Sternly bidden, the tuba-gatherer tremblingly assisted in the bearing of the burden. Then the bravest of the hundred men came forward and lent a hand. An old man with a madly-flaring torch crept close and the leaping flame lighted up the little procession as it slowly made its way to old Guadalupe's house.

For Padre Fernando, bearing the phosphorus-painted shoulders, the short march was a march of a thousand eternal thoughts, as long as the world's age, as deep as the night — thoughts of the West and the spirit's dream; thoughts of the East and the glorious lines of the flesh; thoughts of a man's soul and its promises; thoughts of a

man's body and its victory over the mourning soul.

Margarita sat dozing, for the hour was late. At the creak of the heavy door she sprang to her feet, and, seeing Fernando's face, uttered a low cry.

"Margarita," the white-robed youth spoke compassionately, "it was the body of a fisherman called Canuto that the wind drove in, his body painted with hell-light from the giant jellyfish."

"Thus it goes," mourned Margarita, her little brown hands plucking at her dress. "But a few months ago Canuto was my sweetheart."

"Oh, I am sorry, Margarita, for I, too, am now dead to you."

"No — no — Fernando," moaned Margarita. "No."

"You must go and save yourself and me. Margarita, you and I must not be washed ashore, bathed in the hell-light."

"I am not — afraid."

"I am sorry, Margarita, but I have spoken. You must go from Majayjay."

"But — but my son who will one day be born, Fernando?"

"I know, Margarita. . . . And, Margarita, the world — may this great world love him. . . . Go, little woman, lest your soul perish like the jellyfish in the noonday sun."

“ Oh, it’s the Christian God — I am not afraid of him. He is so far away, like the king in Spain. But you, Fernando, I obey.”

She dropped her eyes so no one could measure the trouble in them.

“ You will give me something, Fernando, that I can always hang around his neck. It will be from you and it will bring him good fortune. Please, Fernando.”

“ And then you are to go.”

“ Then I will go,” whispered Margarita, for she had seen the new-born, far-away vision in his face.

As soon as Fernando disappeared into his chamber, Margarita, with those unfathomable depths in her eyes — depths which could not be clearly seen now on account of the tear-mist — pattered over to the triptych and beat her small brown hands against the closed gilded doors.

“ Wherever I go,” she half sobbed, half whispered, “ I will shoot the arrow and it will come and strike you. It will come as sure as the morning, O white mother with the golden crown! ”

When she heard the footsteps of her lover, she turned from the triptych.

“ This is for you, Margarita,” he said, pressing into her hands a silver locket, a miniature high-groined Gothic window of silver.

“ For him,” she corrected gently.

With the tear-mist deepening in her eyes, she walked out into the corridor where the blackness

purred with the humming of bats' wings. She descended the stairs, passed out through the broad stone entranceway, out into the deserted streets where no man was afoot, out where the spirits hovered hungrily. A dog on an outlying street howled dismally and from the opposite end of the town wailed the mournful reply.

About midnight, the half-moon came singing up over the *cordillera*,* painting the volcano an unmatchable deep blue and pressing a silver kiss upon each upstretching palm crown. Everyone knows how the busy moon loves to linger as she sails over the fairest islands in Oriental seas, how gladly she loiters — as the weary traveler stops to be refreshed at a tea-house on the high slopes of Fujiyama — after her hurried voyage from the shores of South America, across the vast waters of the Pacific, how she loiters over the thousands of jewelled islands, refreshing herself before she begins her sad flight over China with its hundreds of millions, over India with its many scores of millions.

Now she was shining upon all the towns dotting the shores of the island of Buglas from the north to the south. Far to the south, she smiled upon Majayjay, changing to alabaster that quaint, low-sweeping irregular mass of campanile, church and *convento*. Like a humble Kremlin, this mass rose in the heart of a broad village of brown, palm-thatched houses.

*Mountain range.

The moon shone full upon the white and amber panes of a single window in Majayjay's church. The filtered moonlight fell in a long grotesque mosaic upon the bare church floor and upon the prostrate figure of a white-robed boy. The only one who had tried to be his friend was banished — banished and lost! But the moon peeping in could not understand the haggard, tear-stained face of the boy.

All heedless, then, of the penitent stretched out on the cold stones at the foot of the altar-steps, the moon sailed on and soon her light was lying at the foot of the niche where the Virgin Mother stood.

"Blessed Mother — Blessed Mother," came the heart-deep cry of the boy. No answer. Again came the low cry as it had come a hundred times since he had fled in great dismay from the desolate *convento* and had flung himself before the altar where the Good Shepherd patiently waited.

It may have been the draught stirring the faded festoons — there came a soft footfall as of someone timidly advancing.

"Mother of God, Mother of God! You understand," sighed the prostrate one wearily.

Again the soft footfall sounded.

"Margarita!" cried Fernando. The name only echoed through the lonely church. Like a lullaby came the steady soft boom of the breakers.

Yes, those footfalls were drawing near, so tenderly, so timidly. The moonlight still illumined

the foot of the niche where the Virgin Mother stood. The upward reflected light started the heavy gold embroidery shining faintly, started the brilliants in her stately gown and empress's cape winking drowsily.

But now, standing in the grotesque moon mosaic appeared the Virgin Mother herself. Up in the niche, the heavy gold embroidery still shone, the brilliants still winked drowsily. Across the moonlight the Virgin Mother took a few whispering steps. Her garments were a simple gray burnoose and mantle.

Tenderly, with ineffable pity and understanding, she knelt on the cold stones and bent over the tousled head pillowed on the white sleeve, as she had bent innumerable times over a tired, tear-stained boyish face. And she said again as she had so often said before:

“I am with you always, boy. I understand. But we know how the Law of the Father holds forever true, and by it — though in tears and fear and blood — we learn and rise. Yet I will be with you always, boy born in the radiant blossoming world, always.”

Juanito was enthusiastically ringing all the bells in the campanile for the hour of matins. Padre Fernando awoke with a start and raised himself from the cold stones at the steps of the altar. There was no one to be seen but the Virgin Mother in the niche, in the gold-laden, brilliant-studded robes of a medieval queen.

CHAPTER II

THE MANTIO'S SON



IGHT times had the feast-day of Majayjay been celebrated without the return of Margarita. The dancing, too, on Saints' Days had been as gay as ever. Inasmuch as her father had been shipped to Ceuta in Africa and her mother had been swept away by the cholera, even before Margarita vanished from Majayjay — her brown neighbors had shrugged their shoulders, had said "God's will," and had soon forgotten her.

Twenty miles south of Majayjay, however, Margarita daily sold the few necessities of life to the villagers of Natunga. She had a little *nipa** house; on the bamboo floor upstairs she lived and had her sleeping-mats; on the hard-packed ground floor below she had her restaurant and her crowded shop.

On this day, the fishermen hurrying in from the sea had sold her a sting ray and had hung it for her from a bamboo beam in front of her shelves of queer wares. Margarita was proud of this ray; it would bring her a good profit; it was

*A palm much used for thatch.

very large. When she stretched wide her arms, her finger tips could barely touch the edges of the big circular whip-tailed fish.

When four of the richest villagers strolled up and drank lustily of the *tuba* in her brown foaming buckets, Margarita threw herself into the task of enumerating the good points of the sting ray. The spirit of the event swept her on. From four thick tumblers the beady *tuba*, gathered from the tallest palms in Natunga, was fast disappearing and the four drinkers listened happily to the enthusiastic Margarita.

Thud! Something dropped from the shelves hidden behind the big sting ray. *Abao*,* one of the jars full of sugar-balls! They rolled far and wide over the ground.

“My God!” exclaimed one of the rich villagers in his matter-of-fact way.

“*Dios mio!*” echoed another.

But “Guimó!” was the vexed exclamation of Margarita.

In a trice she was behind the big sting ray. After a heartfelt cuff or two, she marched her seven-year-old son out in plain sight of the four rich villagers. Guillermo, or Guimó† as every man in Natunga called him, swallowed hard but the disappointment proved too great.

“*Pillo‡* boy! *Pillo, pillo, pillo* boy!” scolded Margarita. “Again a thief of your mother’s sugar-balls.”

*Oh!

†Pronounced ghee-mó.

‡Bad, mischievous.

“Poor little one,” sympathized a rich villager.

“After I put the jars so high I can scarce reach them myself!” Margarita went on.

“Hard luck,” murmured another villager comfortingly. “That sting ray was splendid cover.”

“Now, Guimó,” commanded his mother, “you pick every one of them up.”

Guimó’s plump face lighted up and his luminous eyes took to dancing. He picked up and replaced all the sugar-balls — but three; and those did not go into the pocket of his transparent hemp jacket worn directly over brown skin.

“What luck it is,” thought Guimó to himself, “to be the son of a *mantio*!* I always get sugar-balls.”

With that assurance, he slipped out of his mother’s shop and raced up the winding road to the river bank. There, under the tallest cocoanut palm, he found Pedro and Tito trustfully waiting. By that palm tree where the river flowed into the sea, the requisite time and solitude could be found to peel the tin foil off a sugar-ball.

“Now I tell you what I am going to do,” announced Guimó when the sugar-ball had dwindled to a bead. “I have waited a very long time and have asked you often, but now I am going to swim across the river — the great wide Natunga — in the afternoon.”

“Bad — bad,” protested Tito, pursing his lips.

*A supernatural being.

"We are forbidden to bathe after the noon. We shall all become sick."

"I have never seen anyone swim in the afternoon," added Pedro, rolling his crossed eyes around.

"That's why I want to try it," asserted Guimó. Off fell the transparent jacket and the gray pantaloons. With hands pointed over his head, Guimó stood poised all ready for the dive. From top to toe, his satiny skin was a light lustrous brown, the most beautiful mankind color in the world.

"Come on."

"I don't want to," complained Tito. "I dare not. I am not the son of a *mantio*, like you."

"You are your father's son, my mother says," explained Pedro, "and you will be up to all kinds of witcheries and devilments."

"*Abao*, come on," challenged Guimó. "Do not be afraid like the shouting gecko."

With that, he dived into the clear water. Up he came, the delicious water rippling against him, and his swift overhand stroke was soon shooting him mid-stream.

"The crocodile does not catch us in the morning," reasoned Tito longingly. "He will not catch us now either."

"Of course, for there are no crocodiles here," said Pedro, proud of his knowledge of the world.

"But the *Hinuptanan** is here, my grand-

*The bejeweled crocodile of folklore.

mother says, and its claws are covered with gold rings and its legs hang full of bracelets."

"You know what Guimó says," answered Pedro. "He says he would rejoice to see it and to capture it and to give the jewels to his mother."

"But the *Hinuptanan*, my grandmother says, is much more clever than other crocodiles and very clever at catching people. He pulls them down; they drown; he carries their bodies under the ground to his master and mistress."

"Look at that water, Tito."

"I am looking."

Now there were three boys splashing in the clear river. A few minutes more and they clambered up on the opposite bank and knelt on the narrow ribbon of white sand. Back of them clustered a score of cocoanut palms enclosed by a hedge of wild shrubs. Beyond this small *kalubihan* extended a mangrove swamp far bigger than the village of Natunga itself. This way and that throughout the forest of mangrove trees perched upon their queer stilts, coursed a hopeless labyrinth of waterways — some shallow, others deep.

"Companions," coaxed Guimó, "now that you are brave, let us all go on. Let's go through the little *kalubihan* here and on into the mangrove swamp. Maybe we can find some Moros."

"Those pirates always hide in swamps," vouchsafed Tito, peering into the shrubbery. "My grandmother says they always do."

"But they do not come any more," sighed Pedro. "They have not been here since I was born."

"Just the same, we might find some," persisted Guimó.

Accompanied by his two faithful followers, he proceeded through the shrubbery and across the *kalubihan*. Soon they found themselves standing thigh-deep in one of the watercourses of the mangrove swamp.

"Now let us go ahead slowly," cautioned Guimó, stumbling along over slimy, springy roots and hoping no Moro would come to light.

"The tide is coming in," warned Tito. "You can see it creep up on the high legs of the mangroves."

"Let us go back," Pedro begged. "It will be too hard to swim between the mangroves."

"And the sun will soon be setting," added Tito.

"Just twenty paces more," proposed Guimó, the adventurous, "but I hope we don't see any Moros."

One step into the deepening swamp water — two — three — four — five — six — seven — eight —

From somewhere in that mangrove forest sharply sounded a single strong treble peal of laughter. Guimó and Pedro and Tito stood like bronze statues.

"A thunder-blasted Moro!" gasped Guimó.

While the boys stood there, hearts thumping

like tom-toms, the water crept up an inch on their brown bodies. Then they turned with one impulse and wallowed stumbling and breathless back to the *kalubihan*. Sharpened as their ears were, they caught no further sound from the sleeping swamp.

"Was it a Moro?" asked the doubting Tito.

"Sure," droned Guimó; "our Moro."

Plunging into the river, they soon pulled themselves up on the Natunga bank.

"*Abao*, where did you put our pantaloons and *camisas*?" demanded Guimó.

"I left mine on the sand here," declared Tito ruefully.

"And mine, too," said Pedro, close to tears.

"Oh, where did they go now?" asked Tito tragically. "No one ever comes here. Can't you see them, Cross-Eyes?"

"I'm glad they're gone," confessed Pedro, "though *nanai*,* I'm sure, has more."

"I think the fisherman's son has played a trick on us again," scolded Guimó.

"May his finger perish in a clam!"

Though they searched high and low, they found not a thread; so they sat down in the sand there where the Natunga River flowed into the sea, and waited for the great copper disk of the sun to sink down between the islets that floated far out yonder. Guimó could see the outlines of the palm trees on them and wondered why those islets floated so steadily in the air while his island,

*Mamma.

Buglas, had to cling to the water. He expressed his resolution to visit Nadulang, that perplexing islet, and its sister, Kabankuan.

“ You can’t get on it,” scoffed Pedro, “ and if you sail your boat under it, rocks might fall down on you.”

“ You needn’t think just because you’re the son of a *mantio*, you can get on Nadulang and I can’t,” declared Tito.

“ I’ll show you, son of fifty fathers.”

“ *Abao*, devil that you are! ”

In that tussle on the white sand, Guimó found that he wasn’t such a devil as he had expected.

“ Fine,” cheered Pedro, the spectator.

When Tito, at last fairly and squarely beaten, began to shed bitter tears, Guimó felt very bad, too, and tried to comfort him, promising to take him along to Nadulang and Kabankuan.

Like a big black mantilla such as their mothers wore to mass on Sunday mornings, the quick tropical darkness sank over the islands and the sea. By way of the deserted beach the boys stole back to the village. Behind Margarita’s little garden they parted, Guimó stealing cautiously up the bamboo ladder into his mother’s kitchen. Down in the *tienda** underneath, he heard his mother zealously contending that she was just simply giving away that slab of ray meat and that she wouldn’t lower the price another *duko*† if the customer bargained all night. Guimó up above

*A little shop.

†A copper coin worth about one cent.

was making the most of every golden moment. He softly tried the first wooden chest. It was locked and his mother had the key. The second wooden chest—locked and his mother had the key. Thunder blast clothes anyway! Then he tried the last wooden chest; it also was locked and his mother had the key.

As he was feeling along the clothes pegs driven into the bamboo framework of the little house, his hand struck the sheath of his mother's bolo. It dropped clatteringly to the floor.

His mother down in the lighted *tienda* never thought of thieves and prowlers, though some of her customers crossed themselves.

"Guimó," she called, scarcely turning her head, "come down at once."

Guimó descended by the front stairway.

"'Sus Maria Santissima!' " wailed Margarita aghast. "Whose little mountaineer are you? Precious savage, where are the clean clothes you put on this day?"

Guimó explained. The customers laughed uproariously.

"And we heard someone laugh in the mangrove swamp," announced Guimó importantly.

"What!" cried out a customer.

"The spirit of a drowned man," explained another darkly.

"No, it was a Moro," this was Guimó's thunderbolt, "and he is mine, for I found him."

"Nonsense," chided Margarita, flicking the

ashes nervously from her cigarette. "The Moros don't come sailing up in the monsoon any more. They are afraid of the Spanish gunboats."

"But they might slip through," growled a customer dubiously.

"Foolishness," scolded Margarita. "The Moro-Moro drama which is performing in Natunga these nights has upset all of you just as it has Guimó. . . . Here, son, is my key ring. You will find clothes in the top of the middle chest."

"But," Guimó called as he scampered up the stairs, "remember, *nanai*, he is my Moro."

"Keep still about your Moros," cried Margarita in exasperation. "Keep still—keep still!"

"At the same time," argued a gray-haired man, "it may be that your son, being the son of a *mantio*, hears things we can not hear."

Thus it was that the discussion of the strange peal of laughter soon raged through Natunga's cocoanut groves. It was exciting news to balance on the tongue's end but too unlikely and too terrible to be believed.

Soon the last customer departed from Margarita's *tienda*. Guimó in fresh pantaloons and *camisa* sat down beside his mother at the solitary table in the restaurant to eat his supper. There was boiled small fish from one blackened pot; broth from another; tender brownish rice from still another. As Guimó ate, he began question-

ing his mother again about the *mantio*, his father. When the fluttering smelly light of the little tin *quinque** made the most fantastic shadows dance on the walls, and when the two of them sat alone in their little palm-thatched house, the darkness outside being as thick as a padre's velvet vestments, Guimó often began his endless questioning about the *mantio*.

“ And, *nanai*, is the *mantio* much taller than the high Spaniard who came here last month? ”

“ Much taller, *toto*. ”†

“ How much, *nanai*? ”

“ As much maybe as the distance between my outstretched hands. And he is very thin and supple like the smoke that curls up from a sinking fire. ”

“ And he caught you, *nanai*, and carried you to his home in the top of the tree at the foot of the mountain. How big around was the tree? ”

“ As large around as this table, son, and so high that the rain clouds often floated through the topmost branches. ”

“ And, *nanai*, were you not sad up there? I would be. ”

“ Ever so lonely, *toto*. ”

“ But how did the *mantio* carry you up there? ”

“ He made a stairway out of air and went leaping up it. ”

“ Could you walk on that stairway, *nanai*? ”

*A tin lamp.

†Darling.

“ No, I would have fallen and broken all the bones in my body.”

“ And you made a ladder of vines and climbed down it and ran away? ”

“ Yes, *toto* mine.”

“ Where did you get the vines? ”

“ Even the vines, my son, clamber up through the great trees to see the blue sky.”

“ Weren't you afraid the *mantio* would catch you? ”

“ Oh, he had gone walking across the sea to China. A *mantio* can walk anywhere, you know, over seas and over mountains, and he goes as fast as the wind.”

“ And when I am a man, what will I be, mother? ”

“ You'll be my strong and wise and powerful son.”

“ Will I go walking over seas and mountains? ”

“ No — no! No! You will stay by the side of your poor old mother.”

“ And what will happen to me, *nanai*, if I lose this silver locket which you make me always wear? ”

“ Your mother's heart would be very sad, *toto*. You must wear it always. It is the gift of your father.”

“ The *mantio*? ”

Margarita made no answer.

“ Why is my locket sealed with silver, mother?

Why can't I look inside it as other people do in theirs? "

" You may, *toto*, when you are a man and your mother commands you to take it to the silver-smith to be opened. Yes, *toto*, when your father lies dead, you may open it. And you must never lose it, never; nor open it till I tell you or you will destroy your mother's heart."

" How will you know when the *mantio* is dead? "

" I will know, boy; I will know."

After the supper was finished and Margarita had washed the plates and glasses, she removed the props which kept the clumsy bamboo doors suspended like awnings. Barring the broad doors of her restaurant and *tienda* for the night, she took the sputtering *quinque* in her hand and went slowly up the front stairway into her small *sala*.

" It is time for us to get to the cockpit, Guimó, and be all ready for the Moro-Moro drama. I do hope you haven't forgotten — since your practice this morning and yesterday — how to do your part as a fairy. Have you? "

" No, *nanai*. It's easy to be a *duende*.* I can even help the lion get his hind legs up on the mountain."

When Margarita and Guimó entered the high-peaked cockpit — now converted into a rough theatre — they found the guitars and violins and bandurias of the orchestra already thrumming

*Fairy.

mournfully. Margarita sat down in the pit and sent Guimó to his place behind the faded curtain.

Finally the curtain dragged wearily to one side and the last acts of the Moro-Moro tale were ready to be unfolded. A long, long story it was that these players strolling down the coast from town to town enacted. Now, on the night of the most terrible climaxes, Guimó's heart thumped as he took his place among the princesses and the giant and the front half of the lion — the other half being late.

A Moro-Moro drama tells the old story of fierce conflict between Christian knights and Mussulman warriors, of captive princesses and buckets of tears. All this meant much to the Christian Filipinos of Luzon and the Visayan Islands, for down to the south their own Mindanao and Sulu Archipelago swarmed with thousands and thousands of those Mohammedan pirates — the Moros. For that reason, the thrill which held the people in Natunga's cockpit possessed a doubly tingling force.

Even behind the scenes, Guimó's eyes grew big and round when the Mussulman warriors in doublet and hose dragged the captive Christian Princess on the stage. The warriors quarreled about their prize; they fought. Guimó trembled at the flash and ring of steel blades, and sighed gratefully when one Mussulman fell with a thrust through his heathen heart.

The Mussulmans and their captive were now

marching along the narrow mountain path at the back of the stage. It was very thrilling, for the orchestra was playing a stately march.

No sooner had the Mussulmans disappeared than the brave Christian Prince hastened on the stage in pursuit. Now Guimó and his two fellow *duendes* glided out of the cave and invited the Prince into their dwelling. But he could not linger; he only begged that a *duende* would lead him to the suffering Princess. Guimó, the appointed one, hopped along ahead of the Prince and soon had him up on the narrow mountain path. Guimó, skipping ahead, saw a seven-foot giant approaching, wearing a most terrifying body and shoulders and head of papier-maché. In fact, the giant had to stoop — and he stooped all in one piece — to avoid crushing his head on the sky. No such unreliable creature had appeared at rehearsal and Guimó did not fancy it. The Christian Prince drew his sword and the giant, his staff. Guimó found himself in between and had a good notion to jump right off the mountain, feeling very confused in front of so many people and wondering why that battle hadn't been fought in the rehearsal.

Well, what would a fairy do? Why, make himself invisible. Guimó, accordingly, crouched down right there on the mountain path and made himself as small as possible behind the tip of a wilted palm leaf. Over him he could hear the passing

of thrusts between giant and Prince; he could hear the hollow sound of blows on the giant's body; he could hear the Prince's crown fall off and bounce down the mountain and hear the Prince mutter curses because that crown business was not in the play. Then he heard a resounding whack on the giant's body — it sounded as though the giant had been smashed right in. Now the irate giant with uplifted staff tottered blindly toward that fool Prince. It was very hard to see the world through such a bosom as his and he took a tremendous fall right over the invisible fairy. He fell headlong down the mountain, breaking off his head and getting his body awkwardly lodged. His feet were paddling distressedly in the air.

The Prince threw away his sword, took a long breath, and pulled the struggling giant out of his shell. Once out, the giant glared at Guimó, picked him up by the legs and pushed him head-first into the ruined torso. The curtain dragged itself shut and the vanished Guimó could hear roars of maddening laughter.

By and by the drama went on. The actors did unusually well, there being only one other bad accident and that was during the sad duel between the defenceless Princess and the lion. The head of the lion roared and plunged; and the king of beasts fatally severed himself in twain, his substitute hind legs having received no warning.

Though it was nearly one o'clock in the morning when the lovely Princess was restored to her glorious Prince, Guimó did not feel at all sleepy.

Once more in their little steep-roofed house, Margarita spread the sleeping-mats on the floor. Guimó drew his red blanket over him and was soon dreaming of conquering long rows of ferocious Mussulmans. Margarita, before she likewise lay down on her *petate*,* drew her sharp long bolo from its sheath and laid it on the mat where her hand would rest on it as she slept.

*A sleeping-mat of woven grass.

CHAPTER III

CYMBALS CRASH



THE sun was crawling up the farther side of the *cordillera* which ran like a lizard's crest the length of the green island of Buglas. Shafts of light as delicate as the heliotrope and as pink as the bloom of the oleander formed the crown of the great volcano. Already the reflection of this crown was lightening the cool shadows under the palms of Natunga.

Off-shore, grounded in the shallow water, two new strange craft of unusual length and strength lay waiting. From them men were silently disembarking and silently creeping over the sand and into the shadows where Natunga slept. These brown men wore bright-colored breeches as snug as acrobats' pantaloons, and gay tight-fitting waistcoats and turbans. Here a gleaming kris caught the pink of the sky and transformed itself into a rosy wriggling serpent; there a slash of heliotrope sky mirrored itself in the blade of a *campilan*,* or in a silver-inlaid *barong*.†

*A two-handed sword.

†A short sword.

A shriek awoke Margarita and Guimó. In the darkness of her tightly closed house Margarita jumped to her feet and snatched the bolo from her sleeping-mat. Far down the street arose more shrieks of terror and pain.

Guimó stood clinging to his mother's hand.

"What is the matter, *nanai*? Why do you tremble?"

"K-s-s-s-s-h!" warned Margarita. "They have come!"

She heard the swift creaking of her stairway and saw the sharp point of a *barong* tear an ugly gash from top to bottom of her palm-covered doorway.

"*Nanai*," wailed Guimó.

Like a flash, Margarita drew the bar of the door. The instant the door swung open, she brought her bolo down on the skull of the intruder. Without a moan, the man toppled backward down the stairway.

"Who, *nanai*?"

"*Hepos!** the Moros have attacked Natunga," answered Margarita despairingly. "And now, son, you must obey your mother."

Margarita tore open the chests ranged along the wall, ceaselessly watching the open door. Out of the door and into every corner of the room she hurled the contents of the chests; she upset chairs and tables and with a sweep demolished her little altar.

*Be silent!

Throughout the length of Natunga's street, in that delicate morning twilight, sounded the screams of the dying and the terror-stricken. Added to the screaming, came the chantings and the frenzied cries of the pirates as they slew those who resisted, bound the unresisting, and accumulated their plunder.

"Now, darling," bade Margarita, "hide like a wild bird under this chest and do not move; for your mother's sake, do not stir or make the faintest sound."

Margarita turned a chest upside down, hacked it and split it slightly with her bolo. Under this half-wrecked chest, Guimó crept wonderingly.

"The Moros will miss you now, my son," promised Margarita. "When they see all this they will think our little house has already been visited."

Guimó, cramped up under the chest, wanted to shout to his mother when he heard the creaking of her footsteps on the stairway. But he had to obey. He did not want to be killed by Moros.

The clamor and the cries and the chanting filled the *kalubihan* as the sun rose higher and higher.

"*Nanai — nanai,*" Guimó whispered drowsily to himself. "God guard *nanai.*"

By and by the street grew quiet; all that could be heard was a dull murmur from the direction of the sea. Guimó wished that he could crawl out but he remained obediently in the chest; and in the close air fell asleep.

Guimó awoke after many minutes, choking and coughing and trying hard to breathe. He pushed up the splintered chest and found his little house gray with smoke. Beyond the vague oblong which showed where the door of the *sala* stood open, he saw the dim red flames of a neighbor's house burning.

Guimó went stumbling and choking down the stairs. He stumbled over the limp figure of the Moro cut down by his mother; he stopped and looked at him carefully. The pirate did not look in the least like the Mussulman warriors of the drama. They had worn black satin and scarlet velvet. But this Moro had a tight-fitting jacket showing a great white arabesque on purple ground, and green breeches with crowded brass buttons the entire length of the outer seam, and a turban lately cut in two.

Guimó did not know which way to turn. Huge clouds of smoke rolled the length of Natunga's street; flames swept along licking up one paper-like house after another without let or hindrance. He wondered where all the people were. Next he ran down the street billowing with smoke and raining hot sparks. Again and again he just saved himself from tripping over the prostrate body of a villager.

“*Nanai!*” he called loudly as he ran. “*Nanai*
. . . *Nanai!*”

The snapping and cracking of the flames, the tumbling together of little brown houses, the

pistol-like explosions of the hollow joints of the bamboo, drowned Guimó's call.

“*Nanai! . . . Nanai!*”

As he ran on through the showering sparks, calling for his mother and ever watchful lest he fall over a villager, he came upon a young man lying prone on his face in the middle of the highway. It was the fisherman's boisterous son, the practical joker of Natunga. In his arms he clutched a little bundle of clothing. The trickling blood had stained the little pantaloons and *camisas* which he had temporarily pilfered from the river bank the afternoon before. In the early dawn light, he had set out to replace the clothes on their own proper doorsteps but he had been cornered before he could finish his prank.

Guimó could find no one to tell him where Margarita was.

Arriving at the end of the village street, he caught a sound from the direction of the sea, a sound like the clashing of cymbals and the beating of gongs.

“*Tam — tam — tam — tam — tam — tam —*” came the distant sound with its ceaseless accompanying — “*Ah-ee-ah—oo! . . . Ah-ee-ah—oo! . . . Ah-ee-ah—oo!*”

Trembling and breathless, Guimó reached the white beach. There near the landward fish-carals, two long arrow-like boats moved majestically, their vast sails of strange shape filled with the morning wind.

Guimó stared at the distant pirates, his heart beating loudly at the sound of the weird barbarous rhythms floating to him from the boats. The decks were swarming with men in gorgeous scarlet and green and orange and blue. Huddled in bow and stern crouched men and women and boys and girls being carried off as slaves far south to some small Sulu island.

Guimó ran to the water's edge and waved his arms. Perhaps his mother would be there among all the Natunga villagers.

"*Nanai!*" he tearfully shouted, but the clashing of the cymbals sounded far too loud. Then, he saw one of the women arise to her feet and wave a kerchief slowly.

"*Nanai!*" he cried. "Oh, my *nanai!* . . . My *nanai!*"

No answer came but the crashing of the cymbals and the beating of the gongs. The kerchief waved slowly in the midst of lance-heads gleaming in the sun—in the midst of blinding flashes from beaten brass on shields. More rapidly now the big-sailed boats were drawing away.

Guimó's fists were digging courageously into his eyes, but even such strong little fists as his could not keep the tears pressed back where they belonged. Now his sturdy little shoulders were heaving. Try as he might, he could not plainly see the flashing lance-heads and the huge sails skimming so swiftly over the open sea where the monsoon blew strong.

CHAPTER IV

GUIMÓ MEETS THE GOVERNOR



AT LAST, when the sparkling sea had swept itself clean of boats, Guimó turned back to the village. A few wisps of smoke curled up between the burnished palm crowns. Natunga's street was marked no longer by its clustered rows of steep-roofed, palm-thatched houses but by rows of upright glowing timbers which showed where the four corners of many a house had once been.

"Now I must go," thought Guimó, "and seek my father."

Finding no one alive in Natunga, he hastened on to a little glade beyond the *kalubihan*. Here some of the village ponies were always tethered to crop the succulent grass. He did not have to stop and choose, for he knew intimately the best pony in Natunga. This bay pony was round and fat and good-natured and, what was more, glad to race like the wind. Its owner somewhere back there in the ashes, or perhaps out on the sea, had let Guimó ride it as many as six or eight times.

Guimó unfastened the tether rope and twisted it into the halter in such a way as to make himself a rude bridle. Then he led the pony alongside a rotten stump and mounted, not feeling very proud of that manner of getting on.

Soon the bay pony was trotting down the narrow trail that led from the *kalubihan* of Natunga to the main coast road. To his back a small boy was clinging tightly. It was better to cling tightly than to run the risk of tumbling off here in the swamp whose oozy depths were so treacherous.

The whole world was before him. But first of all he must ride to Dao, the nearest town along the coast road, and tell the *gobernadorcillo** what a terrible thing had happened. Then he must find himself a home and his father, the *mantio*. He knew that fortune would speed with him because of his strange sonship.

So he clucked and whistled to the pony and the pony gladly broke into a gallop. A dozen carabaos grazing in the sedgy swamp meadow raised their patient heavy heads with those broad out-spreading horns and snorted. The snow-white herons perching sedately on the backs of the granite-colored carabaos spread their white wings and flew hastily away. The rest of the heron flock forgot the frogs and the beetles they were looking for and flew off to the grassy hill where bay ponies did not gallop and bright-eyed boys did not whistle and talk.

*Principal official in a town; a mayor.

A tall gray crane saw Guimó coming and regretful but ever stately flapped its great wings and flew — its spindle legs trailing behind it — off toward the hill of refuge.

Now Guimó was galloping along the main coast road. He had six miles yet to cover before he could deliver the terrible news to Dao. He galloped past thick-clustered clumps of the beautiful plume-like bamboo, past scrubby little groves of cocoanuts, past globelike mango trees with their dense bottle-green foliage, past lantanas that spread their faded orange-colored blossoms even higher than his head, past the low-spreading datura with its long white trumpets.

Sometimes the tall grass swept the crown of his head. Vigilantly he peered into the clumps of trees and into the labyrinthine thickets. He knew why ordinary people were terrified to travel along that road even in broad daylight. He knew that he too must watch for the bandits or they would take his bay pony away from him. He suddenly remembered all the tales of robberies committed along this pretty road. At the same time, had it not been for the bay pony, he would not have minded looking into the bandits' haunt.

All at once he saw swinging down a low hill only three minutes' gallop away, many soldiers on horseback and a fine but mud-spattered carriage drawn by a pair of magpie ponies. At any rate this procession did not look much like bandits.

Greatly interested, Guimó rode forward. Right

in the middle of the road he kept and there he halted with his hand raised.

Muttering curses, these Tagalog soldiers of the *Guardia Civil* jerked up their ponies; the carriage stopped suddenly; all the little horses were dancing and entangling themselves and each other.

“ Out of the road, you accursed little insurrecto! ” yelled a disgruntled Spanish lieutenant riding beside the governor’s carriage. “ Do you want a good beating? This is the governor’s carriage.”

“ For God’s sake, get him out of the road,” exclaimed the governor in his vexation.

“ Excuse me, sir,” pleaded Guimó. “ Don’t you want to know that the Moros have burned Natunga? They killed or carried away everybody but me.”

“ Where is the smoke of the fire? ” demanded one of the Tagalogs.

“ Look! There is only a little of it left in the sky,” answered Guimó pointing seaward.

“ Oh, yes, I’ve been noticing that ever since we got out of the jungle Dao is buried in.”

“ I’ve seen the burning cogon grass make more smoke than that,” said someone else.

“ Where are the Spanish gunboats that catch the pirates? ” Guimó asked anxiously.

“ When was all this? ” asked the governor, lighting a costly cigar.

“ This morning, sir.”

“ It sounds altogether doubtful, your Excellency,” suggested the lieutenant. “ The Moros haven’t tried these islands in a decade. They know better.”

“ Your Excellency,” ventured a Tagalog corporal, “ this may be a ruse to separate our platoon right here in this hotbed of bandits. This has always been the most infested part of the island. Everybody knows that.”

“ Come on, little insurrecto,” ordered the governor, “ and tell us just where the outlaws are and what their number is — if you know.”

“ I don’t know, sir. I am no bandit.”

“ Are you sure? ” asked the governor significantly.

“ Yes, sir. I came from poor Natunga.”

“ Of course he would say that.”

“ A Filipino is born lying, God knows,” muttered the governor. “ And this part of the country is the last place in the world to take chances.”

“ But,” someone suggested, “ it would take only two of us to rush the message of the Moro attack — if there was one — through to the capital.”

“ I assure you,” said the governor, “ that when there are such a few of you, every man counts. I’ve made up my mind to finish this trip and I’m not going to finish it with two men less.”

“ Your Excellency,” spoke the silent Spanish captain, “ isn’t it nonsensical of us to think that this little chap is a decoy? Any bandit would

know that either all of us or else only one or two of us would return to the capital."

"You haven't been in the Philippines long enough, Captain," replied the governor. "No one ever knows what is in the back of a native's mind. I am not satisfied; so I am going to find out. Two of you hold the little insurrecto."

Two soldiers dismounted and took a firm hold on Guimó's arms as he sat on his bay pony.

"And now, Corporal," continued the governor, "here's my cigar. See what the wrong end of it will bring to light."

With wide eyes, Guimó watched the governor knock the ashes from the end of the cigar and draw deeply on it till the end glowed like a live coal. Then he saw the corporal hurry toward him and felt the soldiers' grasp tighten.

While Guimó was still puzzling, the corporal pressed the glowing end of the cigar against Guimó's bare arm.

"Oh, *nanai, nanai*," moaned Guimó. Then, to himself: "You said the son of a *mantio* always had good fortune."

"Are you sure you don't know about the out-laws?" asked the corporal.

"Sure," answered Guimó, biting his lips.

"Try once more, Corporal," commanded the governor, uncomfortably twisting his Spanish mustache.

The corporal obeyed.

"*Nanai*," moaned Guimó instinctively, the tears trickling down his brown cheeks.

"You might better have stayed with your *nanai*," said the governor.

"I couldn't," sobbed Guimó. "The Moros have carried her away. And — and I thought — I thought the Spanish gunboats would bring her back to me if you could let them know about it."

"That is the truth, your Excellency," declared the silent Spanish captain fervently. "Shall I send two men back to the capital to get things started after the Moros?"

"No. You don't know this part of the country as I do. Anyway it wouldn't do any good. By the time we could get the rusty old machinery of this government working, the pirates — if the wind stayed good — would be having a triumphant entry into some dirty little pirate town."

"Your Excellency, it seems a shame not to lift a hand," protested the Spanish captain.

"It does seem so," agreed the governor, once more twaddling his cigar between thin lips. "But this is the Philippines and who in thunderation cares?"

"Now where are you bound for, lad?" asked the Spanish captain.

"I am going to hunt for my father, the *mantio*. I have no mother now."

The governor and the Tagalogs laughed noisily.

"Don't let the priest hear that or you'll be spanked," chuckled the governor.

“ Why? ” asked Guimó. “ Isn’t the *mantio* better than a man? Can’t he walk up stairs made out of air and walk right across islands and seas? ”

Again the governor laughed at poor Guimó’s superstitions. Then he asked wheedlingly: “ Is that your pony, boy? ”

“ Yes, sir. ”

“ Why don’t you give it to the governor of your island? ” coaxed the great man. The lieutenant exchanged winks with the captain. Among the Spaniards of half a dozen rich islands it was — and is to this day — a matter of history and a great joke that the governor of Buglas begged irresistibly for every especially fine pony that he set eyes on.

“ This is mine, sir. In Natunga there are many now without owners. ”

“ That pony isn’t yours, I’m thinking, ” continued the governor. “ Give it to me and I shall say nothing. ”

“ I need him to ride as I search for my father, sir. ”

“ But I am the governor of Buglas! ”

“ And I am the son of a *mantio*, sir. ”

“ That pony is stolen. Just take it, Corporal, ” ordered the governor in a matter-of-fact tone.

In that instant Guimó twirled his pony around, the two men who had held him being just then in the act of remounting, and was off down the main coast road. It *was* his pony and it liked him.

Was it not galloping down the coast road as swiftly as a thunderstorm coming down from the volcano? Was it not listening with all of its two pointed velvety ears to his cluckings and whistlings? No pony in Natunga could run faster and no pony could resist running away with such a featherweight astride.

Guimó peered back over his shoulder and saw two Tagalogs in pursuit. He could hear the governor shout. Guimó clucked anxiously to his bay pony and the bay pony heard him. But the Tagalogs' ponies were not fresh like the bay and even if they had been they could not have kept the distance from widening.

Ping! A bullet drove into the ground near the pony's forefeet and sent the dirt dancing into the air. That made the frightened bay pony gallop all the faster. Guimó was clucking encouragingly and pounding brown ankles against warm smooth ribs.

"Halt!" shouted a Tagalog.

Guimó, watching over his shoulder, saw the man aim his pistol. The pony felt a face burying itself in his thick black mane and heard something that sounded like an angry bee fly only a little way above his forelock.

"Pony! Pony!" whispered Guimó excitedly.

Hoofs twinkling through the air, the pony tore on.

"My pony," murmured Guimó. "My pony, I will never give you to the Spanish swine."

Guimó heard the Tagalogs still shouting at him and heard one bullet then another go zinging past.

As the pony went flying along the road where it curved around a clump of bamboos creaking woe-fully in the wind, the luck of the *mantio's* son turned. The bay pony was limping and slowing up. To Guimó, it sounded as if that clatter of hoofs behind him would in a minute be thundering right over him.

“Pony, pony, what is the matter?”

Pony, however, could not tell him how in his galloping he had driven a bamboo thorn into one of those twinkling hoofs.

“Pony, where does it hurt you?”

As best he could, pony galloped bravely onward. But every one of those moments, the two Tagalog soldiers drew nearer. At the governor's command, they would teach a lesson in obedience to this little rebellious-minded native so disgracefully defying the white man's will.

Then, suddenly, while Guimó watched the endless thicket for an opening, while his heart sank down and down, he spied an almost imperceptible trail twisting away from the coast road and into the bushes. Down this he turned the limping, hurrying pony.

One minute! . . . Two minutes! It seemed as if the soldiers now crashing behind him through the shrubbery would be catching his rope bridle.

Then the trail between the rank shrubs unexpectedly opened and Guimó found himself in the

midst of a score of men armed with bolos that were bright and long. Half a dozen of these brown men stood ready with cocked rifles. Outlaws! Guimó recognized them by the red cotton cloth wrapped like a bandage around each kris and bolo sheath thrust jauntily under belts.

“Two of the *Guardia Civil* after me,” Guimó explained breathlessly. “They want to take my pony from me.”

Half of the men who heard Guimó, vanished into the bushes that bordered the trail. The ponies of the Tagalogs were coming on noisily.

In low voices the bandits around Guimó began plying him with curious questions. But he had no time to answer, for the two Tagalogs drew into sight.

Instantly they turned their ponies and rode wildly back over the faint trail. Guimó heard the bang of a rifle.

“Thunder-blasted luck!” exclaimed the dark, heavy-set leader of the outlaws. “Now we shall have to scatter to the mountains again. . . . What’s your name, youngster?”

“Guimó.” Within himself he said: “I have a friend now.”

The outlaws fired a dozen questions all at once at their small guest. While Guimó told them all that had happened, not a sound could be heard but his voice and the nine whistled notes of the *darawidao* perched in a near-by *madre-cacao*.*

*A Philippine shrub.

It was a strange story but not the last strange one Guimó would have to tell while the *darawidao* cheerfully whistled: “La-le-la — la-le-la — la-le-la” in a soaring scale.

His story finished, Guimó slid from the back of his sleek pony and proceeded to lift up one small hoof after another. In the off forefoot he found the bamboo thorn and gently pulled it out.

The outlaws watched Guimó interestedly. They liked the little chap and said when he grew up all the *dalagas** would love him.

Giving the bay pony a resounding slap of fellowship, Guimó turned to the dark-skinned smiling leader of the outlaws.

“You come from the mountains, sir,” said Guimó eagerly. “You can tell me how to find the home of the *mantio*. Does he still dwell in the very tall tree?”

“The *mantio*,” answered the leader. “Well, I have never seen him that I know of.”

“I have heard of him,” volunteered a bandit, grinning and showing teeth stained blood-red from chewing the betel nut.

“But I have never seen him,” said another.

“Nor I.”

And so one bandit after another confessed that he had never got very near to a *mantio*.

“I doubt if there is a *mantio* in the island,” explained the leader. “Too much holy water has banished all such strange beings.”

*Damsels.

“ But I must find him,” asserted Guimó, “ now since the Moros have taken *nanai* away. He can take me over the seas and the mountains so fast that we’ll be sure to find *nanai* wherever she is — very soon.”

“ Will the *mantio* listen to you, boy? ” asked the leader gently.

“ Surely, sir, for he is my father.”

“ Your father! ”

“ Your father! ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ I am afraid, boy, you will smoke many bales of tobacco before you can find him.”

“ The white men say there is no such a thing as a *mantio*,” remarked a bandit as he lifted his eyebrows doubtfully.

“ They lie,” cried out the oldest of the outlaws. “ They do not know all things.”

“ Still they have the whole world,” the leader acknowledged.

“ They lie just the same,” cried out the old man. “ I live up on the volcano-side and I know that in the great forest there the *mantio* lives. Come with me, youngster, and we shall never rest till we have found the *mantio*, your father.”

“ It will be a fool’s hunting,” warned the leader.

“ Never you mind,” replied the old man. “ The son of the *mantio* shall be my boy.”

The leader shrugged his heavy shoulders significantly and tapped his brow. For the life of

him, Guimó could not understand why his strong friend should do that.

While Guimó was wondering and the men broadly smiling, the bandits lately vanishing into bushes came out of them and they were leading two ponies whose saddles were empty.

“ Well? ” asked the leader.

“ We brought back only the ponies. ”

“ Good, ” said the leader. “ And now, Guimó, each burn on your arm is offset by a government soldier. ”

“ We should have tackled the governor and the rest of them, ” muttered one of the outlaws regretfully.

“ No, ” said his leader, “ that would have made too much of a stir, and we should have had a regular devil sent to take the place of this governor. And now, brothers, we had better slip back to the *cordillera* for a month or two while they try to sweep the island clean in their search for us. We have enough money. ”

In groups of two or three, the men were scattering, some departing for the mountains by this route, others by that.

Last of all, the leader came up to the old man and said: “ Felipe, guard this little chap well and keep yourselves far from the foolish eyes of the government’s agents. ”

CHAPTER V

PIPING: “ *HULAT — LACAT!* ”



OUR after hour the tropical sun blazed down on the three hastening mountainward. Old Felipe trudged ahead, his immense mushroom-shaped *soroc** rakishly atilt on his gray head. Next pattered Guimó, his head tightly bound in a big white handkerchief. Guimó was leading the limping bay pony who, in view of his invalidism, considered that he had privileges. Invariably without giving warning, he stopped dead and reached for each particularly succulent tuft of grass. This, of course, was hard on Guimó's arms and tried his equilibrium sorely. He was sweating like a good fellow and more provoked than a full-grown man.

Each lonely hill proved steeper than the last; each ravine, rockier and more noisily gurgling with racing water. At the same time, the mysterious blue of the *cordillera* was fading out and the peaks lorded over by the slumbering volcano trimmed themselves more sharply and thrust themselves more forbiddingly up into the sky.

*Hat.

Far back basked the gray sea. Guimó as he struggled up each succeeding hill stopped a moment and looked back, but nowhere could he catch a glimpse of a long arrow-like craft skimming to Moro-land on that endless hazy sea.

He remembered, though, that old Felipe believed in the *mantio* and was bound therefore to lay his hand on one sooner or later. Once found, the *mantio* would take steps as long as the distance between two cities and bring *nanai* to her little son in very short order.

The sun was sliding thirstily down toward the distant Sulu Sea as Felipe and Guimó and the bay pony ascended the base of the volcano itself. Far above them, three or four thatched roofs stood out in the full light of the descending sun like toadstools at the foot of a gigantic tree.

"Yonder is our home," explained old Felipe, pointing upward with a twisted hand.

"Aren't you afraid of the volcano?" asked Guimó. "It might do something."

"What if it does? We all must die."

"I don't think I want to die."

"It is nothing."

"But I want to see many things first."

"That you shall, boy. Is not this volcano the home of the old god of all the Visayan Islands, the old god Antiquity?"

"Shall I see him?"

"No, Guimó, never. Ah, if you did, you would lie down and die."

“ But, Uncle Felipe, I don’t want to die. Why do we die anyway? ”

“ Don’t ask me. The white priests say it is God.”

“ Is God like the governor? ”

“ I haven’t seen him, Guimó. He lives in Rome where the Pope lives or else in Spain. But I am safe for I have been baptized. And now come — we must move with quicker footsteps or we shall be buried in the darkness.”

“ I can’t go any faster, Tio Felipe. Somehow I can’t make my legs hurry at all.”

“ I’ll load you on the pony.”

“ But he is so lame. His foot must hurt him very much. I tell you I know what it feels like to have a lame foot.”

“ You are a very foolish boy. Don’t you know that we are the enemies of all the animals and birds? Why, that pony would kill you now if he could.”

“ No, sir, he wouldn’t kill me. Look into his eyes.”

“ You will see. . . . You will see.”

Guimó turned wearily and stroked the velvety nose of the bay pony and the pony playfully nibbled the brown fingers with its lips.

“ I am the son of a *mantio*,” declared Guimó to himself. “ I shall not be like the Filipinos, cruel to my pony.”

On a boulder sunk in the edge of a roaring mountain stream, Guimó sat down to rest.

“Tio Felipe, wait for me,” he called faintly.

Felipe turned and saw Guimó swaying and his mouth dropping open.

“I seem to be so hungry,” murmured Guimó, as his eyes closed and he slid off the boulder to the gravel. The cool mountain air stirred his black hair and flew down the ravine to the plains.

“Guimó! . . . Guimó!” shouted Felipe as he hurried back and bent over the fagged-out little boy. “You’re brave, braver than any boy I have seen between sea-coast and mountain-top. And you too might have become an insect!”

Guimó’s eyes were fluttering and blinking with a dozen astonished questions.

“Listen, Guimó,” said Felipe softly. “Now you can hear them calling.”

“*Hulat!*”* piped a tiny creature among the wild trees.

“*Lacat!*”† came the shrill little answer.

“*Hulat*” ——— “*Lacat.*”

“*Hulat*” ——— “*Lacat.*”

“Guimó, do you know why they are saying that? ‘Oh wait.’ ——— ‘Make haste.’ . . . ‘Oh wait.’ ——— ‘Make haste.’ . . . ‘Oh wait.’ ——— ‘Make haste.’”

“No, Tio Felipe, but I can hear them say it.”

“And, Guimó, little friend,” whispered old Felipe affectionately, the weird light in his eyes growing brighter, “I was so frightened and so sorry. I thought in my haste and my flight that

*Wait!

†Hurry!

I had been cruel to you. It is so long since I was a little boy. Then I feared that you too might be changing into a little creeping insect."

"I?"

"Yes, Guimó. This is the home of the ancient god, Antiquity. This is the enchanted forest. You know that not even one Spaniard dwells in the *cordillera* or on the breast of the great volcano. This is my home and the home of all the spirits afraid of the strange crosses in the lowlands."

"The sun is sinking, Tio Felipe."

"And the children are saying ' *Hulat* ' _____
' *Lacat*.' . . . ' *Hulat* ' _____ ' *Lacat*.'
. . . ' *Hulat* ' _____ ' *Lacat*.' "

"It makes you sad, Tio Felipe."

"Yes, I am always wondering who can change those little piping insects back into children."

"My, were they children once?"

"Yes, Guimó, a brother and a sister; the brother was the older. Their father and mother were very poor, so poor that they could hardly save a copper *duko* a day. And every day the little brother and his tiny sister went to the forest to get wild fruit and to dig such roots as *banayan*, *sak-ang* and *borot*.*

"When the boy was eight years old and the girl was five, the father said to his wife: 'We must kill these children or we shall suffer much hunger and die.'

*Vines with edible roots.

“ ‘It is foolish to kill our children,’ answered the mother. ‘Is it not so? But listen to me. I think it would be better just to send them to the mountain.’

“ Now while the father and mother were talking the little girl was listening anxiously. After she had heard all that they said she secretly filled her handkerchief with shells.

“ That evening, the father took his boy and girl up in the mountain forest. By the time they reached the heart of the forest, the children felt thirsty and begged their father for a drink of water.

“ ‘Await me here,’ commanded the father, ‘for I am going to the spring to get cold water for you.’

“ But he did not. He only hurried back to his house. When he reached there, he cried out to his wife: ‘Now we should be happy because our children are gone and I have two *dukos* with which to buy rice and that is enough for us.’

“ Back in the forest, the children waited a long, long time for their father. At last, the little girl said to her brother: ‘We will go home, brother. Maybe our father and mother will be sorry then and take us in.’

“ ‘I do not know how to find our way home,’ replied the brother. ‘It is farther than I have ever been, sister.’

“ ‘It is very easy, brother.’

“ ‘No — no,’ he answered.

“ ‘ While we were walking last night with our father, dear brother, I dropped a shell for every step of the way.’

“ So they followed the shells back to their home. Again it was evening. But they could not enter their poor little house, for their father had drawn the ladder up within and had barred the door. Sadly the children sat down underneath the house. Looking up between the hundred strips which made the bamboo floor, they could see the little *quinque* shining and see their father and mother eating contentedly. Some of the grains of the cooked rice dropped down through the many cracks. These the little sister picked up and strung on a fine stick.

“ When the little sister had seven sticks full of rice grains, she whispered to her brother: ‘ Let us go now, brother, because we have lost our father and our mother. Let us go to the mountain, who will be our mother now and give us things to eat.’

“ So, day after day, the children roamed through the forest. The ground was very rough and the giant trees touched the sky. The talons of the vines tore their ragged clothing to pieces. Immense fallen trees and black rocks often arose in their path and made them cry. The little sister could hardly make her way and again and again dropped wearily behind.

“ ‘ *Hulat,*’ she would cry pleadingly to her brother. But he would not wait.

“ ‘*Lacat*,’ he would impatiently answer. But she could not make haste.

“ By and by, the brother and sister became two little insects and to this day they are wandering through this mountain forest. Now, listen again, Guimó, and you can hear them calling.”

With big round eyes, Guimó listened to the shrill far-away piping: “*Hulat*” — “*Lacat*.”

“ I have lost my father and mother, too,” he pondered dismally. “ May the thunder blast me, though, if I become a miserable insect.”

Guimó’s feet lagged as he stumbled along the rough trail. Old Felipe was hurrying on account of the darkness and dragging Guimó by the hand. Since Guimó firmly grasped the bay pony’s halter, the whole of the little procession of three appeared to be fleeing.

“ Most people,” explained old Felipe, “ lack courage to be on the trail during the dark hours. During the night, you know, the terrifying *asuangs* fly, very hungry for their supper of human livers. And the horrid *sigbin* that lives in a cave — well, you have not seen the *sigbin* with its body like the body of a bat and its mouth armed with four long sharp teeth and its one ear on top of its head. It is very fond of the tender meat of children.”

Guimó was now clinging as tightly to the hand of old Felipe as he was to the bay pony’s halter.

“ But you need not feel afraid, boy,” continued

Felipe bravely, "for I have a *mutia*,* a charm, and no harm can come to you while you are with me, your old friend, Felipe."

All at once, like phosphorescent toadstools, the little cluster of mountain houses loomed up before the travelers. Guimó's heart jumped gratefully.

"This is my house," said old Felipe. "It is here that I live with my nephew and his wife."

"Luis," called the old man as he halted the procession in front of the third house with its many golden cracks.

"*Si sin-o ang dirá?*"† came the cautious inquiry.

"Felipe, your uncle."

"And what brings you here at this hour?"

"The government is hunting for us again. We had to slay two Tagalogs."

"Take care, Luis," warned a woman's voice. "It may be a plan of your enemy to draw you out and kill you. Whoever comes here at this time of night?"

Suddenly there were no more golden cracks, for the lamp inside the house had been extinguished.

"Light a match and let me see your face," commanded the nephew. "I am watching."

Old Felipe accordingly lighted a match and held it so it shone on his face.

"It is our Uncle Felipe," declared Luis. "Light the *quinque*, Juana."

*Pearl.

†Who is there?

Then Luis carefully removed the heavy bars from the door and let down the ladder to the ground.

"Who is that?" he asked in surprise.

"I have found a son."

"A son!"

"Yes. . . . Come, Guimó, we shall fasten the pony under the house. To-morrow morning we can feed him."

"But he must be hungry to-night, Tio Felipe. I am hungry, I know."

"What a foolish boy you are! Is he not your horse? Let him wait for you."

"I wouldn't want to wait all night for my supper."

"Come up into the house," said Luis, as soon as the pony was tied underneath.

With a heavy heart, Guimó followed old Felipe up the ladder into the toadstool house and watched Luis draw the ladder in and carefully bar the door.

Every few minutes while Guimó was eating his supper of nutty rice and broiled pigeon, he heard the questioning stamp of a little hoof down below.

"Poor pony," he kept thinking, "he will get his supper for breakfast."

"Why are you so sad, boy?" asked old Felipe.

"I can hear what the pony says," sighed Guimó.

"You can hear what the pony says?" asked the awe-struck Juana, the wife of Luis.

“Can you really, boy?” asked the nephew frowning.

“He is the son of a *mantio*,” explained old Felipe.

“What!” shrieked Juana, making the sign of the cross.

“And the pony says: ‘Give me brown rice. Give me *palay*,’”^{*} asserted Guimó.

“I will not unbar the door again to-night,” declared Luis firmly. “It is too dangerous.”

“Our enemies are watchful,” agreed Juana.

“But, even so —”

“Well,” commanded old Felipe, “tell your pony you will give him a fine breakfast in the morning.”

So Guimó bent low with his lips to the cracks in the bamboo floor and sorrowfully uttered his promise. An impatient stamp of a little hoof was the only answer the pony gave.

“That means,” cried Guimó, springing to his feet and spreading wide his arms, “that means bad luck — bad luck — bad luck.”

“God and the Most Holy Virgin,” quavered Juana. “Tio Felipe, send this boy away. I am afraid of him.”

Luis frowned malevolently upon his small, strange guest.

“When he goes, I go with him,” answered the old man quietly.

The supper went on. Everyone crawled into

^{*}Unhusked rice.

the cheerless cave of his own thoughts. The stamp of a small hoof brought one sigh and then another from Guimó's heart.

Then the deep silence was broken. From far off on the volcano-side came four hollow taps like the drummings of a giant woodpecker. The group seated in front of the rice plates sat anxiously and silently listening. They made neither motion nor sound until the second hollow tapping resounded along the black volcano-side.

Old Felipe hurried to the closed thatch window and slid it open a palm's breadth. He thrust his arm out into the darkness and gave four sharp taps on the hollow cylindrical bamboo suspended from the eaves of thick-hanging grass.

"What do four taps mean?" asked Guimó anxiously, noting the worried looks on the faces of Luis and Juana.

"They mean 'Look out! The *Guardia Civil* is abroad,'" replied Luis, lighting a fat cigar and puffing prodigiously.

"The soldiers must be started for the mountain," lamented Juana, gathering up the metal dishes.

A second time old Felipe's tapping echoed back from the mighty mountain forest.

"Hark."

In a moment they heard it, that faint drumming answer from some more distant cluster of houses now in possession of the warning.

"I knew the bad luck would come upon us,"

cried Juana, self-accusingly. "Oh, Tio Felipe, why did you ever bring this child of evil to the volcano?"

"When the pony talks, we must listen," chided Guimó, enjoying his power. "Maybe my pony is some enchanted man."

"*Hepos!*" shouted Luis angrily. Guimó kept still.

"Dear God," moaned Juana, dropping to her knees and repeating a Spanish prayer.

"For God's sake, be still," begged her worried husband.

Guimó stood pondering.

"Juana," he pleaded, "the pony says now that if you will give him his supper no harm will befall you to-night."

"Does he?" asked Juana eagerly. "Does he truly? Then I shall feed him, for that is better than muttering prayers."

Presently the sound of the bay pony munching *palay* was giving Guimó deep satisfaction.

"We can now sleep quietly till the dawn," murmured Juana, to her own great comfort.

"I hope so," said old Felipe. "The *Guardia Civil* loves its bed too well to clamber up black mountains. But we can't wait too long after the dawn."

"Did you have any fortune along the coast road this time, Tio Felipe?" asked Luis covetously.

"My share was only eleven Mexican dollars."

"*Aba!** . . . Will you not have mercy again and let me borrow five of those dollars, Tio Felipe?" begged Luis, his face shining disagreeably in the *quinque's* smoky light.

"No, nephew, I need it for my next journey."

"But I am going to the town to-morrow before the *Guardia Civil* gets too near here. I play monte at the house of Capitan Potenciano and I know I can gain ten times as much as I borrow from you, Tio Felipe."

"I need the money for my journey," repeated the old man.

"Keep your words to yourself," sneered Juana. "He wants the money for his devil of a son."

"What if I do?" muttered Felipe. "You had better keep still. The crows like sharp tongues."

That night Guimó slept on a magnificent scarlet and green sleeping-mat spread by the side of old Felipe's. On the other side of him stretched the mats of Luis and Juana.

Then away along in the depths of the volcano night something awakened Guimó. The room was as black as if it had been buried inside the mountain. Guimó listened and from the other side of the room sounded the excited, sibilant whispers of Luis and Juana.

"I am afraid of them," thought the little boy. "They hate me."

While he lay there, listening sharply in a vain

*Oh!

endeavor to catch a word, to his horror he heard someone arise to his knees and then creep on all fours toward him.

“What will he do to me?” thought Guimó — his heart thumping rapidly.

The creeping figure paused.

“He wouldn’t dare touch me, for I am the son of a *mantio*.”

But the creeping figure passed Guimó’s pillow and moved noiselessly on toward Felipe’s. Guimó, with the quickness of a cat’s spring, turned and threw himself against Luis. With a snarl, the creeper rolled over from the strength of the impact.

“Tio Felipe, wake up!” shouted Guimó. “Wake up. There’s someone after you.”

“You little fiend,” hissed Juana. “The time’ll come when you’ll be paid back.”

Old Felipe sat up instantly and Guimó heard a bolo being drawn from its sheath.

“Put your bolo back,” begged Luis. “I was only going to — ”

“To what?” demanded Felipe, striking a match.

“I couldn’t sleep for thinking of that window beyond you there, dear Uncle,” whined Juana. “I thought I heard someone trying it.”

“Look out for them,” Guimó counseled in old Felipe’s ear. “They were whispering in the dead of night. My *nanai* said that good people sleep at night.”

Luis soon soothed the old man and the old man seemed content when he lay down again on his hard pillow. Guimó slept with old Felipe's hand touching his sleeve, but the old man did not sleep; his weird eyes kept peering into the blackest shadows under the gables.

The glorious morning came. After a plate of breakfast, Felipe said to Guimó: "Come."

"Where are you going?" asked Luis.

"South, far south, through the great forest and over the mountains."

"Not into the heart of the *cordillera*?" asked Juana unbelievably. "The soldiers are not driving you that far."

"Yes, into the heart of it," replied old Felipe firmly. "We shall find the *mantio*, the father of Guimó. We shall not stop until we find him."

"Do you wonder then when people call you crazy?" admonished Juana.

"Let them call me crazy, but do any of them know where the golden carabao comes out of the earth to drink water?"

"Foolish old man," said Luis reproachfully, "you will not come back alive. You know what manner of people live back in the mountains. Surely you will be killed to become the companion into another world of some dead mountaineer. *Aba!*"

"Never mind. I have my *mutia*, my pearl charm."

"Before you go, Tio Felipe, you should tell us

where you have buried the money gathered by you during the past years. If anything befalls you — ”

“ Nothing will befall me,” exclaimed the old man. “ So hold your greedy tongue.”

“ Reconsider your plan, Tio,” coaxed Luis, terrified lest the secret of the money should perish with old Felipe. “ You will be safer here.”

“ Hold your tongue. We shall find the *mantio* and the *mantio* will bring back Guimó’s mother in a jiff.”

Again Guimó saw that mysterious tapping on the forehead. It was strange that people always did that when Felipe’s back was turned.

“ You may carry the blowgun,” said Felipe to Guimó, “ and this handful of arrows for it. I have my bolo and my kris.”

“ Happy journey,” called Juana exasperatedly.

“ *Adios*,” shouted Luis. Then he growled to his wife: “ Our uncle is the grandfather of this world’s fools.”

“ Well, he must be your grandfather then,” snapped Juana. “ But that boy — that boy is a curse. He is not one of us.”

CHAPTER VI

WHERE THE GOLDEN CARABAO DRINKS



O Guimó and old Felipe struck off into the forest. A hundred feet above their heads the vast leafy tree-tops caught up the sunshine. "I never could get to the top of them to see the *mantio*," remarked Guimó. "Never."

All day long they toiled up hill and down dale through the mighty forest. Guimó understood now why the bay pony had to be left behind in Luis's care. Luis would probably take good care of it, said Felipe, because he was such a miser.

"I would feed him because I liked him," declared Guimó. "The pony would know it too."

"It is lonely," came the plaintive words of the little boy again and again.

"If you would only see," invariably came the puzzling answer of the old man, his face half hidden beneath his umbrella-shaped *soroc*.

Guimó accordingly tried very hard to see. Though the shadows were deep, there was no great sun to blind him and he wondered why he could not see those whom old Felipe saw.

Toward the end of the day, they arrived at the brink of a hidden ravine. Down below them where

the cold water tinkled, they saw half a dozen brown men squatting and smoking. These brown men were strong; their shapely bodies were naked save for the loin cloth; within reach rested their long spears with the bright flashing heads.

“ Friends,” called old Felipe.

The brown men sprang to their feet, spears quivering in strong hands. When they saw only an old man and a small boy approaching, they let their spears rest on the rocks and smiled a friendly welcome.

“ Where are you going? ” asked one of them.

“ To the home of the *mantio*,” replied Felipe.

“ That is three days’ journey from here,” another said wonderingly.

“ Come and eat with us,” invited a third mountaineer kindly.

“ *Madamo ñga salamat*,”* replied Felipe gratefully.

Guimó wished that he could speed along the mountain as easily as these brawny men but he was so tired he could not even keep an eye open for the strange beings which, according to old Felipe, peopled the mighty forest.

At last they came to the tiny houses of the brown men. After the noonday meal of forest food, the supper of rice tasted delicious. The water of the mountain brooks was certain to be clear and cold. And sleep where the cool air blew in and out was bound to be sweet.

*Many thanks.

Another morning and they were once more on their way to the south. Still the trees towered up, making the two travelers look like pygmies creeping along in sea-deep shadows.

“ How far away is the volcano now? ” inquired Guimó.

“ We have only stepped off of it, boy. We have still many miles to go.”

At noon, by the edge of a stream of leaping water, they sat down to eat the meal of cold rice the kind-hearted mountaineers had presented them. The meal finished, old Felipe dozed and nodded and Guimó curled up at the foot of a tree and fell sound asleep.

He awakened affrighted. Old Felipe was shaking him excitedly.

“ Guimó, Guimó,” he cried. “ Something is going to happen to us. I saw the *Suta* of the volcano. I was dozing when I heard that stirring in the bushes. I looked and, 'Sus Maria Josep, I caught a glimpse of the *Suta* himself. His body was half black, half white, just like the day and the night. Now my mother told me many times that the *Suta* had left the volcano a hundred years ago but here to-day I saw him with these two eyes. The people used to think that big waves were dashing against the other side of these mountains and that it was the *Suta* who kept those waves from rolling over the mountain and drowning them all. When the people fled to him from the Moros, he would be merciful and drive the

pirates back for them. Then, too, all those brave men who vowed their hearts to him would be given magic powers and they could have come true whatsoever thing they wished."

"Where did the bushes move, Tio Felipe?"

"Yonder, Guimó."

Guimó rubbed his eyes sleepily and peered through the shadows. Then he started directly for the place pointed out as "yonder."

"Stop, boy."

"Tio, I will be a brave man and vow my heart to him to-day. Thus I shall see it all come true."

"You are too little, boy. Besides I don't want to give you up now."

While Tio Felipe stood there with that far-away look in his faded eyes, a weird, terrifying cry burst upon the two wanderers.

"Talar-r-r-ik!" it went. "Talarr-r-r-ik! Talar-r-r-ik!"

"Ho-ho, Guimó. That is only the *talarik*, the toucan. Look, look, quick—there you can see him."

The little boy looked and saw the big toucan perched on the branch of a *tindalo*. Never had he seen such a great red, heavy beak—such big eyes and long lashes on any bird around Natunga.

"Talar-r-r-ik!" again echoed that weird drumlike cry.

"Let us be going," coaxed Guimó. "You say it is our enemy like all the creatures."

The sun was still lingering on the tree-tops but

down below where the tired travelers hurried on the evening dusk was already settling. Guimó was keeping up bravely only a few paces behind the old man beneath the big *soroc*.

“ Oh, Tio Felipe, stop,” called Guimó. “ I saw it move up yonder in those bushes. I saw something gleam like a spear-head and it shone as bright as my locket, Tio.”

The two wanderers stood peering at the bushes far above them but every leaf stood as still as they until Guimó wondered if he had really seen something move and gleam.

“ It could not have been the *mantio*, for a *mantio* is very tall,” chattered the perplexed Guimó. “ And my father would not have vanished like that.”

“ Maybe you also saw the old saviour of our people, the *Suta*.”

“ It was no god, Tio Felipe, I am sure. A god would have been glorious and he would have punished me. My *nanai* taught me that.”

“ From now on, Guimó, we must watch and never sleep. We are getting into a country where strangers are not welcome. . . . I have my *mutia*, my charm,” he continued as he started up from a long reverie. “ And we are on a good mission. . . . But I tell you, little boy, this is a world where only a tiny bit of love escapes from its demijohn. Every man must be an army against the whole earth and sometimes against the sky also.”

Descending into a small valley, they found themselves in a glade. Here, out of the cogon grass overtopping their heads, arose several majestic clumps of bamboo. The snow-white plumes of the cogon grass swayed slightly like those on the helmets of a waiting army.

“Look out, Guimó, for the sharp blades,” warned old Felipe.

The old man took from Guimó’s hands the straight hollow reed as long as himself and fitted a slender arrow in it.

“I knew there would be wild pigeons roosting in the bamboo. See those?” said Felipe, raising the mouthpiece of the blowgun to his lips and taking good aim. “They must be our supper.”

Felipe’s withered cheeks were puffed out with the air that would send the arrow darting. Guimó was holding his breath. A gray pigeon tumbled over and over to the ground. Felipe’s blowgun slowly sank and he drew the arrow out and held it up.

“The pigeon is dead but here is my arrow yet. We have a companion, I think, who also carries a blowgun.”

“Who, Tio Felipe?”

“I wish I knew. . . . Now you wait here, Guimó, while I force my way through the cogon. I know the spot where the pigeon fell.”

Felipe parted the tall grass and Guimó watched it close behind him. He could neither hear nor see the silently-moving old man. He hoped with

all his heart that the *mantio* would not appear just then. These were such tremendous mountains and such giant trees and there was never a human being to answer a small boy's call.

Presently Felipe came back empty-handed.

"Our companion was quicker than I," he explained. "He had already taken the pigeon and all I found was the drops of blood on the grass."

So he took up the blowgun again and moved softly around the glade toward another bamboo clump where the wild pigeons perched. Twice when the tiny shafts left the blowgun, the pretty gray birds fell.

"Now that we have found our supper, shall we look for our companion?" asked Guimó.

"He will seek us, boy, if he wants us."

On a spit over a tiny fire, the pigeons were slowly roasting and the two stained arrows were once more safe in Guimó's bundle.

The evening wind made the tall bamboos sway and as they rubbed against each other, they creaked mournfully.

"Tio Felipe, why do the bamboos cry out all the time?"

"Don't you hear what they say: '*Capitan Bamba Suñgayan — Capitan Bamba Suñgayan — Capitan Bamba Suñgayan*'*?"

"Well, did the *capitan* have horns growing on his head, Uncle?"

*Captain (King) Bamba of the Horns.

“ Yes, he was a very powerful king and he did have horns, little horns, on his head. The barber who cut his hair dared not tell anyone the secret lest he be condemned to death as all earlier barbers had been. But the foolish barber was so unhappy with the secret that he ran away to some small hills outside of Manila and dug a deep hole in the ground. Into this hole he whispered: ‘ *Capitan Bamba Suñgayan — Capitan Bamba Suñgayan.*’ Then he filled the hole with dirt and ran back to the city. Not long after, young bamboo shoots pushed their way up out of the hole. By and by the bamboos were tall and beautiful. Every time the wind blew, they cried out the secret of the king’s little horns. The poor king was so mortified that he fell down dead.”

After their supper of roasted wild pigeon, the two wanderers sat thinking and blinking in the timid flare of their small fire. Even the flames appeared afraid to reach up boldly into the black darkness of the mountain forest.

“ Guimó, can you keep awake while I take a nap? When you grow so sleepy that you can not endure it another minute, awaken me and I shall go and keep our vigil till the dawn. . . . It would not be well for both of us to lie slumbering here. By chance, we might not be able to open our eyes when the day broke.”

“ I can watch, Tio, and put sticks on the fire.”

Old Felipe stretched himself out on his bed of

fresh-cut cogon. While he slept, Guimó sat huddled up close, his arm thrown over the old man's heaving breast.

The night was long and sound asleep. Even the fire fought against being kept awake. It probably wanted to creep down and hide beneath the ground. But Guimó prodded it and kept it awake. Through the red fire sheets, he saw his *nanai* again. She was wildly scattering her possessions to the four corners of her house. She was chopping at the bottom of a chest and bidding her *toto* remain like a mouse in its shelter. She was standing on the deck of the pirate boat and waving her kerchief so slowly — so slowly while the gongs echoed rhythmically over the sea.

"Come, father *mantio*, come," whispered Guimó to the trembling flames.

Then his heart stopped beating. From a low branch on a near-by tree came the mournful cry of the *bukao* — the owl.

"Oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo!"

"Are you my enemy, too, *bukao*?" asked Guimó beneath his breath.

"Oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo!" So the melancholy answer was returned.

"Do you know where my father is?"

"Oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo!"

After a great long time, Guimó muttered to himself. "I know the little *bukao* is lonely too."

Somewhere in the island, he knew, a clock in a church tower was slothfully ticking off drowsy

minutes. But here — here in the mighty forest, the minutes had gone sound asleep.

Then a cold white light began to shine above the tree-tops around the little glade. The small boy with his arm still thrown over the old man's heaving breast watched the light spread out and whiten the patch of dark sky. It was only the shrinking moon rolling up over the *cordillera*.

"I had better arouse Tio Felipe," Guimó concluded, "or I shall be sound asleep and that would be very bad."

When old Felipe sat up and observed the moon above the trees, he said softly to Guimó: "Poor little boy, to stay awake so bravely until an hour past the midnight."

Guimó curled himself up on the fresh-cut cogon. His eyes were fast drooping when a squeal of agony arose piercingly from the farther side of the little glade. The mountain-side echoed.

"What — what is that?" he asked quaveringly, his eyes flying open and winking in the light of the fire.

"It's the shriek of the little wild hog. Maybe the stripes are on him yet. One of the big pythons is probably hungry. You go to sleep, boy. Old Felipe will guard you well. He always has his *mutia*, his charm."

The next day, the two travelers pushed on up slopes that were steeper than thatched roofs, and down them, and always on into the heart of the *cordillera*, the heart of the mighty forest. Again

and again, Guimó peered up into the tops of the trees so far, far above him. There arose the *ipil* trees which — old Felipe said — had wood as dark red as the rose; and the *molaves* with their greenish-yellow hearts; and the *narras* whose ponderous trunks were shot with streaks of pink and red. Guimó peered up into these leafy tree-tops but he never could catch a glimpse of the *mantio*. Sometimes he saw a troupe of small gray monkeys dizzily slipping along from branch to branch. Quietly these little macaques would make their way until they caught sight of him. Then with a multitude of shrieks they would tear away crashingly through the twigs and sun-bathed leaves. Sometimes he saw a flock of green parakeets fly awkwardly away from his path; sometimes an orange-billed parrot.

And once again, while old Felipe and Guimó were seated upon the rocks and drinking deeply of the clear cool water of a tinkling torrent, Guimó spied an unnatural quiver in the thick bushes overhanging the gully's sharp edge; once again he caught a solitary flash of something sharp and shining.

“Tio Felipe,” he called, reaching out and quietly tapping the old man on the arm, “Tio Felipe, I saw it again — that gleaming like my locket. And the bushes moved ever so little. Why does that man always follow us, Uncle?”

“I do not know, Guimó. . . . But if we should now gather together a round handful of

snails from this brook and leave them on a big rock for the *oko*, the *oko* will help us and make our paths safe."

"Is that an *oko* following us, Tio Felipe?"

"No, Guimó; I doubt if he is an *oko*. Though the *oko* is a magician, he will not hurt people."

"Is an *oko* like a *mantio*?"

"No, for the *oko* is even taller. He must be almost twice as tall as I am. His arms and legs are so long that when he sits on the ground, his knees stick up far above his head. His body is all covered with hair, and black locks fall down over his shoulders. His home is a cave and whenever he wishes to he can make himself invisible. I think it would be wise for us to gather him a meal of fat snails. Of all things in the world he likes the fat snails best."

So they left the snails on a big rock in plain sight and went on. Soon the long night overtook them and the dreary vigil was kept as it had been during the night before. The owls said: "Oo-oo-oo-oo-oo!" to every question that bubbled up in the nodding Guimó's thoughts.

Finally one more day came marching on like a relieving army. Early that afternoon, their ears began to hear a faint, far-away roaring.

"It is the cataract," old Felipe nodded sagely.

Every moment that afternoon brought them closer and closer to the steady, cheerful roar. About an hour before sunset, they marched out from the shadows of the giant trees and beheld

before them the glimmering water ribbon which streamed from a precipice many tree-tops above the frothing pool at their feet.

“ This is the heart of the *cordillera*, Guimó. Is it not beautiful? ”

“ *Abao*, and we have not found my father, the *mantio*, Tio.”

“ Maybe he is not in the forest now, Guimó. Maybe — ”

“ But I must find him, mustn’t I? ”

“ In the morning, boy, we shall follow down the creek flowing from this pool and we shall see something then.” The weird light shone strong in the faded eyes. “ We shall see something then.”

“ Will our companion see it too? ”

“ No — No — No! ” cried old Felipe with a vehemence hard to understand. “ I shall kill him quickly if he sees. . . . You understand now, Guimó, how my charm, my *mutia*, guards over us like the angels.”

That night, nevertheless, the usual keen vigil was kept. Toward morning, the sleeping Guimó felt a hand on his shoulder and a gentle shake. When he looked up at Felipe, he saw a strange light of excitement in the dreamy faded eyes.

“ As soon as the dawn comes, boy,” murmured the old man, “ we must be on our way for we shall see something that is wonderful, wonderful, indeed.”

From far off shrilled the lusty crowing of a wild cock. Guimó could barely catch the cheerful

sound above the roar of the pale cataract near by.

“That is the *ilahao*,* Guimó, which always lives in the heart of the *cordillera*. But sometimes—sometimes it wanders to the gardens arounds the villages and sings a song. Now I have never heard the song myself but there is such a song. And when any little boy or girl hears it, he will go where the jungle fowl sings, and he will follow the jungle fowl all through the great forest and never return to his home in the village again.”

Guimó sighed to think how big the world was and how tiny he was beside it.

Finally when the glorious light in the sky made every rock in the brook quite visible, Guimó picked up the blowgun and the arrows and followed old Felipe down along the stream. After they had been trudging about an hour, Felipe stopped in his tracks and gave a low cry.

“Why do you tremble, Tio Felipe?”

“See it, Guimó. See it shining there in the gravel.”

Guimó stared at the gravel spread before him by the mountain stream.

“I don’t see anything, Tio Felipe, except those shining yellow stones.”

“But see how they shine, boy, under the running water there, as well as in the gravel here.”

“They are pretty, Tio Felipe.”

“They are beautiful, Guimó, the most beautiful

*Jungle fowl.

things in the world, the white men say. They are nuggets of gold."

"I have heard of gold but I never saw any in Natunga."

"And the older you grow, the more you will hear of it, boy. But old Felipe has seen too much to believe that it is aught but a poison. Once, years and years ago, when I was a youth, I was here, here in the very heart of the *cordillera*, here where the mountaineers are timid to penetrate. But, Guimó, I who had started out with many companions was the only one who returned to the plains alive. It was on that return journey that I saw the terrible *sigbin* and other — many other of the demons of the forest. You see, I had not won my *mutia* yet. And ever since they have been saying that I am crazy. But I am not crazy and I know where the gold lies and they do not know."

Guimó had been busy picking up a brimming handful of nuggets.

"How heavy they are, Tio Felipe."

"That is enough, boy. We shall carry away no more. Put them in your handkerchief and as soon as you get back home you must put a number of rice grains in with them. If you don't, your nuggets will grow smaller and smaller and at last they will all be gone. The air eats them up."

Guimó stowed the nuggets in his pocket as he was told.

"This is the place," continued the old man, "where the golden carabao comes at night to

drink the fresh water. He comes out of the earth and goes back into it and there are not many who succeed in finding his haunts. You know where his haunt is and so do I but no one else on this island knows the spot. . . . So you must promise me, Guimó, that the secret of this gold will remain in your heart until such a day as the happiness of your life will depend upon it. And you will not know when the happiness of your life is at stake until you are a man with the heart of a man."

Guimó promised by the King of the Mountain, by the *Suta*, and by the ancient god, Antiquity, as well as by Mary and Joseph and Jesus, that he would guard the secret until the far-distant day.

"But where can the *mantio* be, Tio Felipe?"

"I am afraid that my eyes can not see as clearly as they could when I passed through this forest before. I am afraid that I can not see him, boy. Still you should see him — you with the heart of a child and the eyes of a child."

"I have looked so often, Uncle, and have seen nothing but the lonesome birds. But I shall be more watchful still as we press on through the forest to the sea. Maybe I missed him."

"But we shall not press on through the forest. We shall retrace our steps now to my home on the side of the volcano. We may spy the *mantio*, boy, on our way back."

"Don't you think he lives beyond the cataract there, Tio Felipe?" pleaded the little boy dis-

appointed. "Aba, I shall never find him and poor *nanai* will stay away off there on a pirate island."

"We cannot go beyond the cataract, boy. Even my *mutia* might fail me there. Have we not come to the heart of the *cordillera*? But then we stand a good chance of finding him yet on our long march back to the volcano."

So the old man and the boy turned their faces northward. They left the sound of the companionable roaring cataract behind them. Once more they trudged wearily through the unbroken silence of the mighty forest.

On the second day away from the cataract, Guimó called old Felipe's attention to a strange movement in some bushes a full arrow-shot distant.

"Our companion is with us again," sighed Felipe.

"Do you know what he wants, Tio?"

"Yes."

"What, Tio Felipe?"

"Something he can not get because I have my charm, my *mutia*."

"What?"

"Never mind, boy. Let us wait patiently. Just remember I have my *mutia*."

Guimó was kept very busy peering into the depths of the forest. Now that he was drawing closer and closer to that part of the volcano where the little groups of toadstool houses clustered, he

tried harder and harder to see that shy being, the *mantio*. But he never saw the *mantio*. Now and again, he caught only the flash of a polished blade and a trembling among the twigs of the low-growing bushes.

“Tio Felipe will take care of me,” he thought. Then he would look up at the old man beneath the broad *soroc*, only to find him lost in a dream.

Two more days had gone by. The wanderers were again on the volcano-side with a faint path made by human feet beneath them. The unseen men who had passed that way seemed like friends after the lonely days in the heart of the *cordillera*. The path itself was Guimó's friend.

While Guimó sat his watch that night, he heard on the volcano-side above him the plaintive cry of a woman:

“*O-hoy — O-hoy — O-hoy — E uli ang amon bulan!*”

“I am glad,” said Guimó to himself, “that we are so near to the land of people.”

Guimó awakened old Felipe for again that plaintive musical cry was echoing down the volcano side.

“Who has their moon, Tio Felipe?”

“The serpent — the great serpent has little by little been eating up and swallowing the moon. You and I have seen how small the moon has been growing and how long and black the darkness. So now the woman is crying out to the serpent. Hear how she prays: ‘Hail — Hail —

Hail — Give us back our moon, O Serpent, for it is the crown of our king! ’ ’

“ It makes me feel cold, Tio Felipe,” whispered Guimó.

“ I can guard over you, boy. All the spirits of the forest cannot harm you.”

The first exquisite touches of dawn were illuminating the sky above the lofty tree-tops. There was just enough dawn to warn the ghosts and spirits to fly back to their tombs and caverns. Old Felipe long ago physically wearied from his expedition into the heart of the *cordillera*, stood his post watchfully until he saw those first dawn streamers. Then the old worn-out man allowed himself to doze off. Those streamers of light, he knew, would dissipate the perils of the long black hours. Besides, he knew that he was somewhere in the neighborhood of small thatched houses where dwelt men who would come to his call.

In such a fashion it happened that no one saw the crouching figure — sliding from tree to tree always nearer and nearer to the sleeping Guimó and the dozing Felipe. But this crouching figure carried no flashing blade of spear or bolo. Only a sheathed dagger cowered under the figure’s belt.

Two lean hands reached out of the darkness and paused only a second over Guimó’s throat.

Guimó’s eyes flashed open bewilderedly. A strange ringing sang in his ears; a terrible weight

pressed on his throat. He tried to cry out but that strange ringing only grew louder.

He felt himself being picked up from his bed of leaves; in a moment he was whisked off into the lonely darkness where old Felipe could not help him. Then the terrible weight on his throat lightened and a calloused hand pressed strongly over his mouth. The cool air tasted sweet and that horrible singing ceased.

"The instant you make a noise," came a threatening whisper from his captor, "you little devil, that instant you perish."

"Luis," Guimó tried to say, but he succeeded in uttering only a tiny inarticulate moan.

"Now whisper to me where old Tio Felipe buried his money. He has taken you for his son. Therefore you must know."

Guimó shook his head.

"For three days and nights I have been waiting along this trail for you. It was not long to wait. . . . You might as well tell me where the money lies hidden, for my wife and I will allow no harlot's son to come between our crazy old uncle and us. You see this dagger, don't you? "

As soon as the calloused hand lifted itself from his mouth, Guimó whispered earnestly: "I don't know. I don't know, Luis. He would not tell me."

Looking upward through the thick tree-tops he watched the streamers of dawn light slowly length-

ening. He wished and wished that Tio Felipe would awaken and hasten to him with the precious *mutia*. If his father, the *mantio*, would but appear now!

“ You don’t know? ” mocked Luis in a whisper.
“ You don’t know! ”

“ Guimó! Guimó! ” resounded a loud echoing shout of alarm.

“ Tio Felipe has awakened,” thought Guimó. He listened anxiously to the old man’s footsteps hastening aimlessly between the giant trees.

Luis carried Guimó farther into the deep shadows.

“ You’re only in our way anyhow, O *mantio*’s son. And if you know where the money lies, may you die with the secret rotting in you.”

Guimó could not call upon his Tio Felipe now for the calloused hand was pressing his lips till they bled. The dagger’s blade hung like a writhing snake above him.

“ Guimó! ” old Felipe was calling sadly.
“ Guimó! ”

The writhing dagger hung poised. The crackling of a twig near by had turned Luis to stone.

That instant a spear with a silvery flashing head shot out from behind a great tree. It plunged like a flash of light into Luis’s back and he fell prone and dead over Guimó, the dagger burying itself in the earth.

“ Tio Felipe! ” called Guimó in his terror, doubting if anyone could hear the wee sound.

A mountain-man sprang out of the bushes and drew forth his spear with its no-longer-flashing head.

“ Little one,” he said to Guimó, in a tongue containing now and then a queer-sounding syllable, “ I am glad that it did not have to be you. My brother who died has now received one who must be his servant in the world of the dead. It is long that I have followed the old man and you, pausing only when I heard the sound of the cataract, for into the circle of that sound I dared not enter. It is long that I followed — ever since the day my brother died — but I heard the old man tell you about his charm, his *mutia*; I saw him show it to you — so near was I, listening and watching — so from day to day I put off the hurling of my spear. It is good.”

The brown mountain-man with the satisfied light in his eyes vanished into the forest.

Guimó called and old Felipe soon found the shadowy spot where his little boy waited.

“ Luis! . . . Luis! ” he cried in his first surprise. “ *Abao!* . . . What a pity! *Lastima!* ”*

“ He had that dagger raised over my throat, Tio Felipe,” murmured Guimó, still trembling from his fright.

“ He did! ”

“ Yes, he told me I was in his way, Uncle.”

“ You may have been in his way but you’re not

*What a pity.

in mine, Guimó boy. . . . Have you the gold nuggets still? All right; just remember the promise you have sworn to keep for old Felipe. If you break it, we shall perish. Now we can go home. We shall leave Luis here for the *wok-woks*, the crows."

"But the *mantio*? "

"He must be in China or Java now, boy."

CHAPTER VII

GUIMÓ INHERITS THE WORLD



GUIMÓ was a fifteen year old stripling.

One day up in the little toadstool house on the side of the volcano, old Felipe — whose hair shone as white as the clouds now and whose eyes were more dreamy and more faded than ever — old Felipe called Guimó to him and said:

“ Can Juana hear us? ”

“ No, Tio Felipe; she is beating the clothes down by the brook.”

“ Guimó, do you remember the way to the stream where the golden carabao comes out at night to drink? ”

“ Yes, Tio Felipe? ”

“ And you have kept the promise? ”

“ Yes — always.”

“ And you will keep it as I told you? ”

“ I swear it, Tio Felipe.”

“ And you know the spots where I buried my money? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Well, to-day I give you my *mutia*, my charm.”

“ But you need that, Uncle.”

“ No, I am growing old. I do not need it any longer. To-morrow night at midnight I shall die.”

“ No, no! What talk is yours! ”

“ You will see, Guimó. To-morrow night at midnight.”

“ *Abao*, you are not sick, Uncle.”

“ Of course I am not sick. Nevertheless, I shall die. I shall stretch out on my mat and fall asleep and never wake up.”

“ Oh, what shall I do for a friend then, Tio Felipe? ”

Old Felipe gazed proudly upon the lithe stripling who stood before him. Filipinos who were not sons of *mantios* were never as beautiful as this boy of his. Old Felipe would often call Guimó to him and bid him sit down very near. Then the old man would sit and peer with his dim old eyes into Guimó's bright shining ones and let his fancy run to that day when those friendly audacious eyes would be making the heart of some fair *dalaga* dance. Old Felipe marveled, too, at the full, clear-cut mischievous lips which told so many dawning thoughts without resorting to words. The many thoughts that those lips expressed were queer and unexpected and such as no other boys even dreamed of. He was all virility, old Felipe sometimes said, after the fashion of the bandit leader's pony, and fond of that which was brave and strong.

Since their return years before from the cataract, they had lived in Felipe's little house up on

the volcano-side, Juana attending the house humbly and believing that Luis's fate had been a judgment from God. Guimó no longer felt afraid of her in spite of many a covert malignant glance from her half-shut eyes.

Each time the bandits had reassembled, old Felipe had followed them and had brought home a little booty or a pocketful of silver coins. As Guimó had grown older, he, too, had gone on these exciting expeditions. More than once, old Felipe and Guimó had been driven far up the volcano-side by the pursuing *Guardia Civil*. But the tapping on the hollow bamboo hung under the eaves of a distant watcher's thatched house had always uttered its warning in time.

For a small amount of silver, one of Felipe's neighbors — who had once upon a time lived peacefully in Iloilo — had taught Guimó to read and to write and to get along fairly well with Spanish, the tongue of their rulers.

A night and a day passed and the evening came.

"To-night, at midnight, I die," old Felipe repeated unconcernedly.

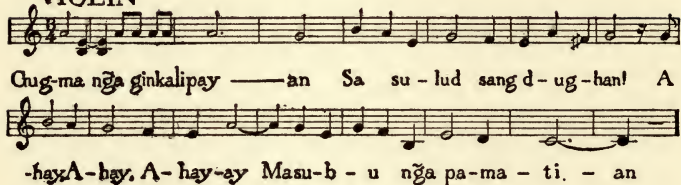
"Tio Felipe, how do you know?"

"I am old and I know. . . . This evening, Guimó, I want you to take down your guitar and sing me all the songs that you know, for to-morrow I shall be where there are no songs."

The first song that Guimó sang, the people called "*Gugma ñga Ginkalipayan*" — Love's Happiness.

“ *Gugma ñga ginkalipayan*
Sa sulud sang dughan!
A-hay — A-hay — A-ha-ay,
Masubu ñga pamatian.”

VIOLIN



“ Oh, love — dear love and thy sweetness
 That steals within my heart!
 A-hay — A-hay — A-ha-ay!
 That one day we must part.”

The plaintive melody of this song proved too much for Guimó. His voice broke and something glistened in his shining eyes.

“ What, Guimó! You shouldn't be sad. To die is nothing.” And Felipe slapped the youth on his bare brown shoulder.

“ It's perfectly foolish,” commented Juana. “ What is the use of feeling sad when we know that God's will is acting? ”

“ What is the use! ” cried Guimó. “ What is the use! Well, I have a heart in my body! ”

Juana and old Felipe only stared at him without understanding.

“ You are not like us,” sighed Felipe. “ But,

never mind, sing your songs and play me the music of the dances.”

So Guimó sang song after song in the beloved minor keys. Some of them made him think of his *nanai* carried away years before by the Moro pirates. Others, still, made him dream of the lonely forests of the *cordillera* with all their invisible people. Others, still, made him dream of the magnificent world and of a future charged with mysterious delights.

Then he played the various dances with their palpitating sensuous rhythms. Old Felipe's eyes as he lay prone on his faded sleeping-mat and hard red pillow, lighted up with long-sleeping memories.

Guimó paused, his glance resting wistfully on the serene face of the old white-haired man.

“ You have played and you have sung and in one hour more I shall be dead.”

From the north echoed four quick taps on a hollow cylinder.

“ Danger,” muttered Guimó. “ What can the *Guardia Civil* be out for at this hour of the night? ”

“ To the window, Guimó, and send the warning along,” commanded Felipe.

The bamboo as Guimó beat upon it resounded menacingly through the night.

“ I am not afraid of the night,” continued old Felipe, “ for it was one midnight, by the bamboo tree, that I wrestled alone with a powerful spirit-

man. I had taken the egg from the *kokok's** nest in the bamboo tree and had replaced it with a copper *cikapaton*† as the *manog mutia*, the pearl gatherer, had bidden me. I waited. At midnight the spirit-man came and I wrestled with him three hours before I vanquished him. But, once vanquished, he gave me the beautiful *mutia* that my Guimó now has."

"And maybe it will protect me, Tio Felipe."

"What a queer boy you are to say 'maybe.' I know — I know it will."

"Will it protect us if the *Guardia Civil* comes and surrounds us, Uncle? "

"I shall not need protection, boy. Besides, I do not think they will come away up here in the night. But should they come, you will find the *mutia* better than five human friends."

"Tio Felipe, I wish you would not die."

"The hour is drawing nigh, Guimó. I shall soon be asleep but where I sleep you will soon forget. You know how the gourd vines creep over the burying-ground. But, before you, boy, the world lies as beautiful as the rainbow and that world is yours."

"Where are you going now, Uncle? "

"I do not know. Probably to rest in the cool ground."

"Not to the sky as the pious women say? " persisted Guimó.

"How could an old man like me get to the sky?"

*Bird — no specific kind.

†Coin.

And what would I do up there among the white men? ”

In the little house with its steep grass roof, Guimó and old Felipe and Juana sat silently waiting.

“ It must be about midnight,” Juana whispered half-eagerly. Guimó wondered why the woman should be listening for something at that hour, why she should appear so restless.

Guimó saw the old man’s eyes flutter shut. He sat, he did not stop to count how many long minutes, his brown eyes staring into unknown spaces.

He was aroused by Juana’s matter-of-fact voice saying: “ He’s dead at last. His heart stopped beating long ago. And now we must prepare him for the burial.”

Juana brought in two small crosses which she had made ready hours before and placed one, together with a small quantity of lime, in each motionless hand.

“ Don’t sit there dreaming, Guimó,” she scolded. “ You’ve got everything, I suppose. You should be very happy.”

Guimó only sat still, his head between his knees.

“ Won’t you give me a part of that money, Guimó? I am Felipe’s niece and if you were fair you would give me my share. . . . Oh, if I only knew where he buried it all! ”

But Guimó did not move or speak.

“ Oh, I know you won’t give me anything,” Juana went on whiningly. “ You think I hate the

sight of you. Well, I do — I do for you were old Felipe's *palanga*.* . . . And you needn't give me anything — anything at all. But I'm thinking, Guimó, I'm thinking you'll buy very few cigarettes with that money. Did you dream for one moment that I would allow you to defeat me, that I could not wait patiently? Yes, you can have your stolen money but I shall have you."

For a long time, Guimó had been sitting beside old Felipe. He jumped to his feet now, for something had gone crashing against the house wall. It had gone crashing directly below a thatch window, tightly closed like every other opening.

Juana screamed but her voice betrayed the triumph in it.

A quick blow from a bolo and the window fastening was severed. Guimó watched the window slide jerkily open. He saw two soldiers leap from the bamboo ladder without into the room where the *quinque* light fluttered wildly from the draught.

"Dead," exclaimed the corporal, making the sign of the cross.

"Again we've traveled half the night long on the errand of a fool," growled his Tagalog companion angrily.

"Yes, the old one is dead," agreed Juana complacently.

"And the other houses here are empty. The tapping on the bamboo was certainly loud enough.

*Favorite.

. . . Stay outside, men; the old villain lies dead. . . . May the thunder blast us for ever coming here! ”

“ Did my brother not guide you here as I told him? Did he not inform you of your opportunity as I bade him? ” asked Juana, her half-shut eyes dilating. “ I would not have you make this hard trip for nothing.”

“ Did you know that the old bandit was dead? ”

“ I knew he would be. Oh, you shall not return to your camp empty-handed! Never fear. Take this stripling here.”

The corporal and the Tagalog private stared at Guimó.

“ He is one of the bandits,” continued Juana more excitedly. “ He always went out with them on their expeditions. And he has hidden all the old man’s money so I, the rightful heir, can not obtain it. Arrest him, I say. He is the one who brought about the death of my husband in the mountain-forest.”

Juana’s voice was ringing and the soldiers smiling disdainfully.

“ A boy will count for one,” complained the corporal,” even if it’s no special glory for us.”

While Guimó was listening, a squareness was showing itself in the thrust of his jaw. The world that was as beautiful as a rainbow was his. Felipe had said so.

This in mind, Guimó suddenly snuffed out the *quinque*. He snatched up old Felipe’s bolo and

making strong sweeps with that keen-bladed weapon, he rushed for the open window. One of the soldiers sank to the floor. Juana screamed, this time with genuine terror in her voice. The other soldier with a gash the length of his cheek, a gash from jaw to cheek bone, was moaning and scrambling out of the window. The world was Guimó's. Accordingly, as close as a shadow, he followed the moaning soldier down the ladder and blessed the clouds for blinding the sky. There was a rushing of feet and the sound of rifle striking rifle as the soldiers came running in the darkness and the confusion to the foot of the ladder. And in the darkness and the confusion, while the wounded soldier moaned and his companions begged anxiously for information, Guimó, because he trod so close on the heels of his bleeding victim, slipped away from his enemies and fled stumbling and panting on and on into the friendly forest.

“The darkness, at least, is my friend,” he muttered thankfully.

CHAPTER VIII

A FRIEND BRINGING A PYTHON.



WHEN morning came, Guimó saw ahead of him the face of a cliff on the volcano's side. To the brow of this cliff his strong muscles swiftly carried him. There he stood, lithe and strong, gazing out over the world that was his, and as he stood, the wonderful dreams of youth floated before him like those rosy clouds over the distant sea.

Before him for miles and miles stretched hills and villages, rice fields and sugar plantations, the sea-coast towns and the shining sea itself and the islets far out in the sea. Through the drowsy haze, he studied the coast but where Natunga had once stood he could not determine. Up to the north along the deep green palm-fringed coast he saw a white bell-tower reach skyward. That, he knew, was Majayjay.

But now, *aba*, all this shining land from *cordillera* to sea was forbidden land, because with blood he had won his right to the beautiful iridescent world.

At any rate, the world ran in both directions.

Not only down to the sea but up over the mountains it ran, and Guimó had chosen the path over the mountains. From Felipe he had learned where on the other side of the volcano the fastnesses of the *Ati*—the Negritos—lay hidden. According to hearsay, those fastnesses were impenetrable but Guimó was not afraid of them. He had long been learning the mastery of mighty forest and woodland.

So with a last look down toward the tiny cluster of toadstool houses—in one of which old Felipe lay ready for the burial—Guimó turned and strode off into the forest.

Once, when the sun was passing directly over the tree-tops above him, a small brown deer sprang out of a clump of bushes and ran away with the swiftness of the wind.

“ Oh, *usa, usa,*” laughed Guimó, “ this time you are fooled, for I am not your enemy and I know from your pretty eyes that you are not mine.”

Guimó climbed hurriedly on and upward. Everywhere from great tree to great tree hung the tangled lengths of the *lianas*.* Innumerable times the long shoots of the *bejuco* vine, armed with their hawklike talons, tore at his clothing or drew blood from brown hands. Old Felipe’s bolo, however, had a sharp edge and a friendly way of helping him along.

Once, that afternoon, while Guimó was fighting with the sharp-taloned *bejuco* shoots, he struck

*Woody creepers.

with his hand a bag of thin whitish membrane hanging from a drooping branch. Straightway hundreds of young ants poured out over his head and shoulders. They bit him savagely. The sudden burning and stinging made him cry out just once. Then he squared his jaw and proceeded to brush the young ants to the ground.

“I’ll look like a Negrito surely by the time I find their settlement,” he thought ruefully as he stroked his brown cheeks.

Three hours before sunset he reached the crest of the *cordillera*. At his right the bare crater of the volcano towered, piled up with loose sulphur-tinted fragments of rock and emitting a thin wind-driven stream of smoke. And now, indeed, the whole world was spread out around him. He could see both coasts of the island of Buglas and many neighboring islands big and little and away off yonder on a distant broad island what seemed to be a big city.

“Let them capture me now if they can,” Guimó called loudly to the sparse stunted shrubs around him.

Then Guimó began to clamber down and down toward the cuplike valley set in the midst of bluish peaks. This, he knew, was the main retreat of the timid Negritos.

Downward and still downward he hastened. He felt that he must be almost at the edge of the cuplike valley. Stepping out of the shadows of the great trees, he found himself at the edge of a

grassy gully. Scattered along the edge of this valley were clumps of bamboos, sighing and creaking and saying: "*Capitan Bamba Suñgayan! Capitan Bamba Suñgayan!*"

And there by the side of a broad, clear pool formed in the mountain stream, he beheld the first of the Negritos. What an ugly little black man he was! Thick crinkly black hair stuck out from his head, making it look like a great woolen ball. Into this hair was thrust a long bamboo comb decorated with bright birds' feathers. From the ends of the bright feathers brilliant tassels dangled. Down the Negrito's bare back hung a small grass basket. On his right leg, below the knee, a leglet of wild boar's bristles pointing straight outward was fastened.

Why, Guimó wondered, did that fellow stand there like a bisque image, his bow — longer than himself — of *palma brava*, drawn and fitted with a light arrow of straight mountain cane? While Guimó stood puzzling, he heard the twang of that bowstring of light *bejuco* vine and saw the arrow rise to the surface with a fish impaled upon it.

"Friend," Guimó hailed the black man in the tongue of the Negritos. He knew but a few words of the shy little people because only at long intervals did they venture over the *cordillera* to sell their beeswax and to buy their cloth and knives.

Without uttering a sound, the startled little man flashed out of sight. Disappointedly, Guimó listened to the alarmed fleeing footsteps as they

went snapping and crashing in the direction of the settlement in the cuplike valley.

“ He is afraid of me, too,” muttered Guimó to the lonely gully. “ Now if I go on, there’ll be a herd of the little men waiting for me behind the trunks of trees and the leaves of bushes. I’ve got to prove that I come as a friend. I must prove that.”

Guimó wandered slowly around the grassy gully with its ragged border of squeaking bamboos. He could not give them the precious *mutia* of Tio Felipe. He could not give them the old handkerchief which concealed the gold nuggets and the rice grains. He could not give them the sealed silver locket which his *nanai* had long ago hung around his neck.

“ But I have a charm, and I know the right thought will come to me,” he kept repeating to himself.

As he strolled aimlessly along, firm in the belief that something would turn up, he listened vaguely to the musical “ Tur — tur — tur ” of the turtle doves high up in the creaking bamboos.

“ The darkness will catch me yet,” thought Guimó anxiously. “ I don’t believe I have an hour left.”

At last, the thought and the chance of fulfillment both came in the same instant. There, in plain sight, extending around from behind a small bamboo clump, the tail of a python lay sleepily, and Guimó had heard scores of times that the

Negritos esteemed python meat above all other delicacies.

“Thunder blast me,” he exclaimed, “I might have known there’d be a python here. They like the runways in the tall grass and the bamboos.”

His first task was to move softly around until he could find the python’s head.

“*Yawa!*”* he whispered frowning. “The *sapat*† is as long as two women. Thanks to God it is no bigger.”

Guimó was glad to see that the big snake had just eaten, for its full stomach would make it less interested in affairs. Bolo in hand, he moved carefully toward the ponderous coil.

“Shut your eyes, you *sapat!*”

But the *sapat* gave a sudden terrific leap toward the boy with the raised bolo. The bolo, nevertheless, flashed down with tremendous force and severed the python’s head from its writhing body. The teeth, already sunk in Guimó’s thigh, relaxed; he shook the head loose; it dropped to the ground.

“*Abao*, I’m not afraid of you, *sapat*; you have no poison. Now, hurry up and stop your wriggling, for you’ve got to stand between me and the Negritos’ arrows.”

When, after impatient waiting, Guimó ventured to shoulder his burden and to get on his way, he found that his troubles had only begun. But he staggered resolutely along, as unsteadily as a man who has drunk too much *tuba*. With every step

*Devil take it!

†Creature.

he hoped that the distance to the settlement of the little black men would not be great.

The most comfortable way of carrying the python, he soon found, was to hang it like a pair of bags over his shoulders.

“ I must look like the devil himself, bringing a Christmas present.”

Then there was the gleaming of a fine smile as his predicament and his Moro-Moro appearance dawned upon him. That smile at his own queer woes lightened his thoughts a lot and his aching shoulders a little.

“ A friend, bringing you a python,” called Guimó to the desolate trees along the faint path to the settlement. It would be best to state his errand, since he could not know where the long bows might even then be waiting, taut and drawn.

“ A friend, bringing you a python,” he called again and again but not a rustle sounded behind leafy bush or great tree trunk. He noted how down in the cup-like valley the darkness was thickening. He knew how the arrows would fly if the little black bowmen could not see the plump python.

“ A friend, bringing you a python,” he shouted once more.

His muscles ached as he stumbled on through the blue shadows in the race between himself and the setting sun.

His heart jumped when he heard soft stirrings in the path behind him. He turned and there,

all at once, he saw fifteen or twenty of the small black men armed with bows and arrows.

“ I am a friend,” he explained, as he dropped his heavy load to the path, “ and I bring you this python for a feast. Here is my bolo. You can see that I do not wish to hurt you. I want to live among you and be your friend.”

One of the Negritos began to talk excitedly to his companions. Guimó was glad to see that they no longer frowned as they stared at him.

“ And where do you come from? ” asked the Negrito in Guimó’s own dialect.

Guimó told whence and how he had come and how he desired a safe refuge in their fastnesses.

“ Come with us.”

Two of the little black men picked up the python and in a moment all were moving rapidly into the bottom of the cuplike valley where the blue shadows still thickened.

The gleam of a dozen fires showed where, far away through the forest, the settlement of the Negritos nestled.

Many rough little sheds without floor or walls proved to be the dwellings of the black men. Guimó was disappointed. This would be living like an ill-kept pony. And the women, *aba*, they were even uglier than the men.

While the shy people were cutting the meat up into bits and stringing it on strips of cane and holding it to roast over the fire, a sleek black maiden took the python’s heart and portions of

the entrails and cut them up fine and scattered them to the east and west and north and south.

“That is the share of the spirits we must thank,” explained the Negrito who could talk with Guimó in his own dialect.

When the python had roasted, the women drew out from the hot coals and ashes lengths of green bamboo. These they split open with a crack of a bolo, and out on clean banana leaves poured the steaming rice and squash and caladium. Guimó, almost famished after his fast, began to think that the black women were not so ugly after all. When the sleek black maiden brought a portion of steaming vegetable and roasted python, and smiled upon him, he recalled dozens of *dalagas* less beautiful.

While the feast progressed, the forest echoed with barbaric music on the flute, the jew's-harp, the bronze gong and the bamboo violin. In these throbbing rhythms lurked something which put joy into Guimó's feet and made him long to dance with the sleek black maiden. Then Guimó took the flute and played over the air of

“*Gugma ñga ginkalipayan — Sa sulud sang dughan.*”

“Sing it,” he thought the sleek black maiden bade him.

So he sang while the Negritos listened intently. This kind of “Love's Happiness” sounded strange, indeed, to their ears. It was an echo from the other side of the volcano. They could

not understand Guimó's strange words but then how little words counted!

But, as he sang song after song at the childish pleadings of his small black hearers, the sleek black maiden disappeared from before him and he was singing those songs again for old Felipe. His heart grew heavy and his fingers listless as he asked himself where his old friend now waited.

"What has come over our musician?" asked the Negrito who always did the talking to Guimó.

"I'm thinking about the world," he answered huskily.

"The world! What's that?"

A blinding flash of lightning made the forest and the fires and the naked black people stand out like figures in a pit of blue fire. The deep boom of the thunder set the valley shuddering. The next flash of the lightning showed the sleek maiden dropping a handful of bones in each fire.

"Why does she do that?" asked Guimó.

"She burns the deer bones to stop the thunder and the lightning," answered the Negrito as soon as the mighty boom had gone crashing over the sharp mountain-peaks to the sea.

Guimó dwelt in the midst of his Negrito friends many months, winning their confidence and delighting them thoroughly by means of the music he drew from the hempen strings of the cocoanut guitar he himself had fashioned. Day after day he astounded them with unheard-of thoughts and the miracles of swift clever fingers. Even the

old men hearkened to him and the old women called him a wise spirit.

One day, after he had lived in the cuplike valley many months, a group of his black people brought in a brown-skinned prisoner, a man of his own race and color, hands closely bound by sharp *bejuco* thongs. Guimó stared at him, held by the look of fixed despair in the fellow's eyes.

"To-night you will see the torture dance," announced one of the old Negrito men. "We have a prisoner now."

"Not with a living man?" Guimó asked incredulously.

"Yes, yes, O Python. We cannot let the man go home and fetch his brothers over the volcano to slay us."

"Then you would not let me return to the land of my people, O Chanting Brook?"

"You — you, the Python! You would not dare to possess such a wish." The old Negrito shook his head. "The brown people, the Filipinos, drove us to the center of the mountains and we can go no farther. O Python, never in the memory of the oldest man has one of your brown people returned out of this valley."

All that day Guimó had the brown prisoner in his thoughts. "Poor fellow! . . . Poor fellow!" repeated itself in his mind like the heavy beat of a pestle in a rice mortar.

Darkness fell only too soon. A big bonfire was soon snapping and rumbling under the trees, not

far from the firmly planted stake. Guimó sat in a shadowy spot where he could think undisturbed.

With a shudder, he watched the silent prisoner being thonged to the stake. The red light of the rumbling fire flared upon the naked bodies of the score of black men lining up in front of the prisoner. The red light flared upon them and upon the shining steel of the bolos they carried. Far around stretched the wide circle of eager on-lookers. Guimó, however, kept alone in his shadowy spot.

A bronze gong started throbbing heavily like a terror-stricken heart, and the shrill notes of a flute came echoing like the singing of blood in a man's ears. In perfect step and time the Negritos were dancing. Now each Negrito with hand over mouth — still in perfect time — was uttering a succession of wild, long-drawn singing notes.

Guimó, sitting rigid after the fashion of one gazing into the glittering eyes of a snake, felt a warm hand pressing his. He turned and saw Forest Vine, the sleek black maiden.

"I saw you sitting here, alone and sad," she murmured.

The throbbing of the gongs sounded faster and faster. The flute shrieked madly. The great bon-fire throwing its glare to the very tree-tops rumbled menacingly. The steps of the dancers beat more and more hurriedly upon the ground. The long-drawn singing notes were changing into a frenzied dog-like baying, reminding Guimó of

desolate moonlight nights. Now the shining bolos were slowly lifting.

Guimó sprang to his feet, his own bolo trembling in his hand.

“Do not go, O Python.”

“I could do something to stop — ”

“Foolish one, no! No! It is better for one to perish than for two.”

He felt strong little hands clasping his arm and the pressure of her body against his.

With slowly-advancing, rapidly-striking steps, the circle of naked Negritos was drawing near to the prisoner at the stake. The throbbing bronze gong was the leader of them.

“A-ah!” moaned Forest Vine, clinging in fear to Guimó’s arm. The shining bolos rose and fell flashing and banished the prisoner from the valley.

“Aba, these are not my people!” lamented Guimó, the Python.

“Why, Python?”

The next morning, the sleek black maiden brought a gift, a *bejuco* leglet of wild boar’s bristles, and fastened it below Guimó’s knee.

“A gift for you, O Python. Is not the wild boar the most hardy of animals?”

“You should have more heed, Forest Vine, and not come to me this way. You must know that your father has made all arrangements for selling you in marriage.”

“You will see — you will see, O Python.”

On the following day, Boulder, the brother of Forest Vine, and Guimó went out into the forest. When they returned at nightfall, they each brought a fragment, carefully concealed, of a substance resembling yellow moss. This they had obtained with extreme difficulty from its place of growth high up in a teak-wood tree.

“This is the most powerful charm in the world,” explained Boulder again. “I saw it growing up in the teak-wood many days ago but I told no one save Forest Vine. She was the one who coaxed me to take you with me. We two, she said, could share the charm and not one of the people might know about it.”

“Forest Vine is comely.”

“This charm, O Python, will make you well and your enemy sick. On the brook it will float upstream and it will attract women to your breast.”

“It will float upstream?”

“Yes, O Python.”

“It is better to believe than to try it, Boulder.”

It was the morning set for Forest Vine's wedding. Anxiously her father and mother awaited the coming of Sapan-wood, the bridegroom, with his first load of gifts. The parents being satisfied, the slow procession to the bridegroom's house set out. Guimó and Boulder and dozens of others, old and young, trailed along after the sleek black maiden and her prospective lord.

Forest Vine had not taken fifty steps when she

made her first play. She squatted sedately in the path and threw a mischievous smile at Guimó as the bridegroom hastened away to bring more gifts. She liked this business of being queen.

When Sapan-wood finally returned with a gift of red cloth, Forest Vine arose to her feet and the procession wended itself leisurely forward.

Twice — thrice — four times, Forest Vine squatted provokingly in the path and made the distracted bridegroom scurry around for more gifts and still more. At each point of halt, Forest Vine smiled more and more contentedly — in Guimó's direction.

When Sapan-wood saw his future wife sink away from him down upon her shapely heels for the fifth time, he drove his fingers distractedly into his long bushy hair. He set out resolutely, nevertheless, determined to find by hook or crook some still-unthought-of object to lay at her feet.

“What do you think Sapan-wood is?” chided Forest Vine's father. “He is not a sugar-planter from beyond the volcano.”

“Oh, father,” answered the smiling black maiden, “it is I who am being married to that man.”

Nothing but the return of Sapan-wood three hours later, bearing a toilsomely acquired necklace of glass beads, brought relief to the confused mind of the father of Forest Vine. In the meantime, Forest Vine took her pleasure in smiling upon Guimó and in asking him many questions.

With the beads hanging around her smooth neck, she deigned to proceed by Sapan-wood's side for what must have been ten or a dozen minutes. The bridegroom ventured to breathe freely, confident in the belief that he had conquered her heart for once and all. Then Forest Vine dropped. Her worried father groaned. The procession gasped and Guimó choked. Sapan-wood secretly prayed to the spirits in all things that the volcano overwhelm him and his like.

The sleek black maiden, however, did not mind waiting, even though she had to wait from noon till sundown and, at that, without success.

"Now behold what you have done to Sapan-wood, O Forest Vine," wailed her father, as he drew from his little grass bag the flint and steel. "We must have a fire. We cannot sit here in the dark woods."

"You are right, my father. I remember now that he is gone."

The next day Sapan-wood returned and begged for mercy, confessing that he had nothing more in the world. But Forest Vine had made up her mind long before.

"If you have nothing, you will not have me either," she affirmed. "I know whom I want for my husband."

"Who?" asked all those around.

Forest Vine laughed.

"The Python!" guessed someone, tassels bobbing on bamboo comb.

“ Yes, the Python! The Filipino! ”

From mouth to mouth, the word flew as swiftly as the kingfisher dives. Forest Vine wished to marry that stranger, the Python. Discussion grew rife. Should Forest Vine be allowed to marry him? Or should the Python be disposed of like all other intruders and no longer be left to play havoc with the hearts of their daughters? That cuplike valley hummed like a wild bees' nest.

“ On my breast, I shall draw blood by means of the poisoned arrow,” cried Forest Vine after a discussion which saw the sun rise from sharp mountain peak to zenith. “ I shall draw blood by means of the poisoned arrow, if I can not have my Filipino boy.”

“ Go, bring him,” commanded Forest Vine's father.

A dozen — perhaps two dozen — small black men set out by as many criss-crossing forest paths to call the youth the sleek black maiden had chosen. At nightfall, they came straggling in, one by one, from all sides of the cuplike valley.

“ You have not brought him to me, you sluggards,” cried Forest Vine sorrowfully. “ *A-hay* — *a-hay*,* he has returned to his own people.”

*Alas!

CHAPTER IX

THE CALL OF HIS PEOPLE



ONCE more Guimó stood, lithe and straight and strong, upon the crest of the *cordillera*. This time, to the left of him arose the crater of the volcano with its fluttering streamer of wind-driven smoke.

A glad light shone in his eyes as he stood gazing out over the hills and plains, villages and towns that lay motionless in the blazing noonday light. Behind him in the blue depths hid the settlement of the Negritos. Before him extended the territories of his own people. His own people, yes, he would descend into their midst and make them his friends and dance and sing with them. They would not know that he was a fugitive and a bandit. They would have forgotten. And he had sworn never to be a fugitive and a bandit again.

In its way, the lonely forest was a wonderful place but he felt that where men worked and lived together in towns and cities would be far more wonderful. People, his own people, men and women and maidens — away up there on the *cordillera's* lonely crest he could hear them calling him.

The next morning he had reached the rich sugar-plains. On either side of the dusty road stretched the broad acres of ripe cane. Men cutting the cane in those fields were working like a hill of ants and piling the purple stalks into lumbering two-wheeled carts. As the broad-horned carabaos drew their burden of succulent cane to the distant sugar mill, the road rang with the shouts of the drivers and hid itself beneath clouds of choking dust.

Guimó hailed a hurrying driver and asked him the name of the *hacienda*.

“This is *Hacienda Paz*,” answered the driver. Then he shouted impatiently to his puffing carabao and hastened on in his cloud of dust.

Guimó hurried on after the lumbering tumbrels piled high with clean purple cane. Through the dust and the heat, he hurried on toward the distant pudgy white chimney whence issued an untiring volume of thick smoke.

“Here I can work,” he thought hopefully, “and see if there’s anything to civilization.”

Now he was entering the square formed by the broad zinc-roofed sheds filled with the clamor of voices and the rumble and clanking of the mill crushing cane; completing the square was the stable and the owner’s immense sagging moss-sprinkled mansion with its high-walled garden of orange trees.

It was while Guimó was slowly drawing near to the broad stairway that swept in a stately fashion

to the veranda of the mansion, while Guimó was thinking what he should say in his half-forgotten Spanish, it was then that Guimó caught a glimpse of *her*. She flashed upon him as a vision might. Guimó stood motionless, for he was not expecting to see a vision enthroned in the cool shadows of a mansion's basement walls. Here in the cool shadows of the stone walls bearing the mansion on their high shoulders, she reigned — mistress of a small shop, a *tienda*.

Clearly, however, Guimó could see that she was not one of the *tao* women. *Tao* women drawled through their noses and reddened their teeth by buyo-chewing and possessed noses rather flattish and thick lips and hair tightly knobbed on top of their heads. But this one in the *tienda* had fair features, pale and aristocratic, and luxuriant hair with a sprig of sweet *sampaguita** thrust in it, and eyes that glowed.

The hot blood suddenly rushed to Guimó's face and thence suffused itself over his statuesque body, causing him genuine suffering. He had become wretchedly aware of his scanty threadbare clothing, of his bare feet and hatless head. Then he turned softly and walked away as hastily as appearances would permit. He longed to run but this longing he suppressed. *Aba*, she would observe him if he ran.

The clanking of the sugar mill, the groaning of the laden tumbrels, the shouting of vexed

*A fragrant white flower.

drivers, could not penetrate the consciousness of Guimó in flight. Long before he reached the outskirts of *Hacienda Paz* — and safe beyond the glowing eyes of her — he started worrying at the delay of days his project would entail. If he took but a week, in that week a thousand things could happen to her.

Though he spent but the interval from one sunrise to the next to reach the volcano-side and that cluster of toadstool houses where he and old Felipe had lived together for eight years, he felt that he had squandered a dire quantity of life's span and had grown a year older in the bargain. A pang of regret went through him when he saw the little houses rotting, falling to pieces, abandoned; but even that state of affairs had its bright side, for now without any ruinous delays he could set to work and dig up a bagful of silver coins from one of the several places where old Felipe had buried his treasure long ago.

The nearest town where tailors made white suits was Kalakan. To make the journey from the volcano to Kalakan would swallow up another epoch which could never be recalled. . . .

At daybreak, Guimó was perched feverishly on the steps that led to the tailor's house in Kalakan.

"I am very busy," explained the tailor for the tenth time, as he peered at Guimó over his brass-rimmed spectacles. "I am very busy and I cannot get your clothes done in one minute less than a fortnight."

“Mother of God!” cried Guimó. “A man, they say, can go from here to China in less time than that.”

“Or a woman,” sagely answered the unperplexed tailor.

“Yes, a woman — a woman! If you had ever been young yourself — ”

“I was, my son.”

“Then you might not keep me waiting here so long. I won’t always be young.”

“I know it. You’ll outgrow it.”

Guimó cared not for the town of Kalakan. There was some pleasure, however, in counting the stitches as the serene tailor took them. When he wasn’t counting stitches, he studied the *jeunesse doree* of the town and studied the styles they affected. Sometimes he pondered in the shoe-shop the problem of color as applied to velvet *chinelas*.* Finally in a great outburst he seized upon an azure as blue as the tropical sky.

One day he entered the Chinese shop and bought a certain soft straw hat which he knew would make him as dashing as the most debonair young buck in Kalakan. It proved even better than he expected but, in spite of that, he snatched it off quickly. In due time, the face that he saw in the narrow mirror would be presented fittingly before her. Her glowing eyes would rest proudly upon him then.

On the crucial day of the fitting of the new gar-

*Heelless velvet slipper.

ments, Guimó showed — to the tailor's consternation — that he had the eye of a mountain eagle.

“ Be still, son. You have a fine figure and no need to be so finical.”

“ But I don't want to be swathed till I look like a gray monkey being teased by *cuadrilleros*.^{*} Too many of you look that way.”

“ Of *you*, did you say? If I were you, I should say *us*.”

“ I tell you, tailor, I am not one of *us*.”

“ Who, then, might you be? ”

“ The one who loves *her*.”

Guimó, at that, proved himself only the more exacting. When a line was right, his eyes lighted up; when a line displeased him, his eyes burned restlessly. The tailor became more and more confused, more and more wrathful from moment to moment, till, to cap the climax, he hurled his heavy scissors at Guimó and drove him out of the shop, forbidding him to return before the next day if he thought life sweet.

That, of course, gave Guimó only the more golden hours in which to sit by himself on the steps of the band-stand in the middle of the plaza and to practice his Spanish by the bookful.

At the end of a fortnight — a sufficient time for kingdoms to rise and fall — Guimó was prepared to march on *Hacienda Paz*.

^{*}Policemen.

CHAPTER X

BEAUTIFUL STAR



ANGELA CONCHA, the daughter of Señor Juan Concha, sat enthroned in the shadows of the cool stone walls of *Hacienda Paz*. As usual, she was vending the various quaint products that a Filipino holds dear, to the workmen on her father's broad plantation, and scolding herself every time she sold an article at less than a hundred per cent profit. During the preceding milling Señor Juan had let her keep the profits and she had bought herself a piano but the stately instrument disappointed her bitterly, having gone tinkly before the end of the second month of the rainy season.

It was a late tropical afternoon and business was dull. Thinking to soothe her careworn nerves, she lighted a cigarette and busied herself daintily puffing the aromatic smoke out between her white teeth.

"'Sus Maria Josep!" she suddenly cried. "Who is yonder well-favored stranger?"

Guimó's trim figure in its trim white suit caused cigarette and *tienda* to be forgotten.

"I am certain he can tell me all about Manila. I know he has come from the great city."

Guimó was hesitatingly approaching the palace of the queen.

"His shoes are giving him pain, poor fellow," ran Angela's sympathetic thoughts.

Guimó doffed the dashing hat; Angela caught herself gazing straight into his friendly eyes.

"*Buenas tardes*,"* said Guimó as sophisticatedly as his thumping heart would permit.

"*Buenas tardes*, Señor."

Guimó felt goose flesh on his back when the thought that he was a señor swept over him.

"Beautiful star," said Guimó, resting his hands on the ancient brown counter. Angela's cheeks became the color of the new-blown oleander.

"I love you," he finished softly, though no one else could possibly have heard.

"S-s-s-s-sh!" Angela was pointing to her lips.

Guimó replied by laying his hand across the breast of his snowy jacket.

"I am Angela."

"That is so — you must have a name. You are Angela? Well, I am Guimó."

"Where are you going?"

"To you — to you, beautiful star."

"And where do you come from?"

"From beyond the volcano where the sun rises. I know the sun's secret now. I know why he climbs up over the mountain peaks so hurriedly every morning."

"I do not like fancy speeches," chided Angela

*Good evening.

disappointedly. "They sound like the poetry recited between sonatas at a dance."

"But when they are as true as the world, beautiful star?"

"Then you did not learn them from a book?"

"I learned them from the sky and the caves and the raging typhoons and the cotton-white moon and the mighty sighing trees, Angela, on hundreds of lonely nights. They are as honest as God's world."

"I am glad. Yes, I am glad — though my mother would call me shameless — for now I love them," she replied in a humble whisper.

While they stood there, a rider on a white pony came galloping across the quadrangle. The rider's skin had been deeply browned by the sun and his shoulders stooped from weariness. His wondering brown eyes told of his pure Malayan blood.

"A *copita** of gin, daughter," ordered the man without alighting. "And, friend, what brings you here?" he asked, turning to Guimó.

"If you please, sir, I would work for you."

"Work? Well, what kind of a Filipino are you? I am astonished. But you look intelligent and strong; so I'll take you."

"He hails from Manila, papa," said Angela, as she handed her father the dram of gin.

"The devil! I haven't time to plant trees wherever I want him to work."

*Wine-glass.

“ Excuse me, sir. Since I was seven years old, I have lived yonder on the side of the volcano.”

“ Good! That explains your strength. You are the boy I want. Well, I’ll put you over a gang of laborers. That’ll test your mettle. It’s a good deal harder than taking a bolo and cutting cane all day. You look, though, as if you could keep your men plugging and you look as if I could teach you quickly. Angela, give him one of the foremen’s rooms upstairs.”

The white pony trotted away and Guimó slipped off quietly to fetch his bundle of clothes from its hiding-place in the tall cogon. It didn’t matter now — his triumphal entry had been made.

“ Where is your trunk? ” asked Angela, when Guimó returned, bearing his unpretentious bundle on his shoulder.

“ Trunk? ”

“ Yes, trunk — *baul*? ” she asked somewhat impatiently.

“ I had forgotten. I never saw but one or two and those we burned up after we had taken — ”

Guimó’s teeth clicked together. In the nick of time, he remembered that Angela had never been a bandit like old Felipe and himself.

“ Why do you stop, Guimó? ”

“ I got to the end, beautiful star.”

“ Well, it was very foolish of you to burn those trunks up.”

Guimó followed Angela up the broad stairway, across the wide veranda with its rickety tables

and spindling chairs, into a *sala* which could have contained as many as six toadstool houses. How beautifully Angela seemed at home in this magnificent room with its ponderous sofas and gleaming tables and its profusion of unheard-of chairs on rockers. When Angela paused for the fraction of a moment in front of a vast gold-framed mirror, Guimó also paused. *Aba*, she looked no more beautiful in the great glass than down below in the cool shadows of the *tienda*.

While Guimó followed along, absorbedly studying Angela's gorgeous print train sweeping over the far-stretching, dark, glistening floor, his unfamiliar shoes worked his downfall. It was a disastrous fall.

Instinctively, Guimó looked around. Angela was trying to appear gracious and compassionate. This touched Guimó and he said: "Do, Angela, do."

Angela obeyed. In fact, she was still joyfully shaking, when a portly lady hastened in from the dining room only to see the handsome newcomer standing there, erect, crestfallen, but still able to consider with shining eyes the delightfulness of *her*.

"Mother, another notch in your pistol."

"But even so, I can't make this more than a reflection of your grandfather's house in Manila."

"Better a sagging old house like this that we own, mother, than a governor's palace gambled away."

“ Who is this native, Angela? ”

“ Guimó, the new *capataz*. ”*

“ I’ll show him to his quarters. Did you leave Glicería down in the *tienda*? All right, then, you may go into my room. I shall be back directly and we can have our evening devotions. Light the candles on the altar and see that the censer has enough oil to last another day. ”

To Guimó, the dingy walls, the heavy four-poster bed with its dignified tester, the window with its innumerable conch panes, all seemed objects rare and priceless. Truly, it was the luck of a *mantio*’s son to dwell in a room like this.

While he was stealing back toward the veranda, he heard a strange murmur floating out from Señora Concha’s room. Tiptoeing silently, he was soon able to peer through the narrow crack left by the partly-closed door.

There, with a dancing light fluttering on their faces, knelt Angela and her mother. Whom, he wondered, could their eyes be so devotedly beseeching? To his nostrils came a mysterious perfume.

The days of Guimó’s new life clamored wonderfully on and on. That strength acquired on the volcano-side now stood him splendidly in hand, for the tropical sun beat down day after day without pausing and the irresponsible laborers had to be hourly driven. The milling season was in full swing. Nothing dared halt the cutting and the

*Foreman.

crushing of the gold-laden purple cane. Many a time Guimó looked up from the low sun-flooded sugar plains and wished himself in the distant blue *cordillera* where the little green parrakeets fluttered about in the mighty trees. But here at the end of the long day in the fiery sun there waited for him the cool evening and the smile of Angela.

One evening Señora Concha came up to Guimó where he sat alone in an obscure corner of the veranda and said to him:

“Guimó, you are no Filipino. Your countenance tells me that you are a white man. Are you?”

“No — no, Señora. I’m a brown Malayan.”

“Who ever found a Filipino with such features as yours, Guimó?”

“No, I am a Filipino and these are my people, Señora.”

“Who was your father?”

“My mother, before the pirates took her captive, told me that my father was a *mantio*.”

“A *mantio*!” The señora’s voice was full of astonishment. “Well, I, too, am a *mestiza*,* my father being a Spanish officer and my mother a Tagalog. . . . Remember that we are here in the midst of those that hate us and when the time arrives, Guimó, we are to stand on the side of the white blood in us.”

A thousand times Guimó weighed her words.

*Half-blood.

Could the sad lady be seeking something, then, as she knelt so many times in front of the resplendent altar?

One star-lit evening, before the moon had risen, Guimó and a fellow *capataz* were strolling aimlessly down the narrow street where the thatched houses of the laborers huddled. Suddenly, as they were passing a faded-out hut standing somewhat apart from the others at the very end of the street, they heard a low voice cry out passionately: "The hell that the white man taught us, they have given us. Like fools we sit here and endure it year after year." The voice shook with excitement. "Why does one accusing word from a Spaniard's lips mean prison, torture, banishment, death for us who can utter no word in our own defense? Treason, treason, they cry at us but the holy angels themselves could not make our oppressors believe us when we before God moan out our denials. Oh, when shall we be free? When? When? When?"

"I tell you, Guimó," muttered the brother *capataz* cautiously, "if Padre Miguel, the friar that comes to this *hacienda*, or if but one of our Spanish neighbors should so much as hear what we have just heard, every man in that tumble-down house would be carted off to prison. And the prison would be only the beginning."

"Why don't they do something, then? Who is such a fool as to expect justice? I am not old but a dozen times already I have learned that it is

only the weak fool who in his foolishness looks for justice in such a world as ours. You — and no one else — must clear the path before you.”

“Some day,” Guimó could scarcely catch the *capataz*’s low-whispered words, “the people will arise and we shall no longer live in an island whose very air is dread.”

“Surely, why not? Old Felipe always declared that the beautiful world was ours. Come now; let us go back. There is no glory in being an eaves-dropper.”

After that, hardly a day arose which failed to give Guimó an opportunity to observe the unrest among the thronged laborers. A passionate word soon suppressed, a grim look at the distant horizon, long mumbled talks over the rice-plates, murmured conferences night after night in the tumble-down house, showed the drift of the brown-skinned people’s hopes. And Guimó heard such tales of wrongs endured that he placed no credence in them.

Then one day when the sun was under amber clouds, Padre Miguel, the friar of the parish, came riding to *Hacienda Paz* in his showy brass-trimmed *quilez*.* The man from across seas opened the door of the vehicle, stepped out swingingly, and slammed the door shut again. Guimó’s wondering eyes continued their study, while the friar smoothed down the folds of his voluminous

*A two-wheeled carriage.

white robe and precisely straightened the snowy stole and domino.

“*Abao*,” whispered the brown boy’s thoughts, “the padre is a soldier indeed. Behold how he strides, and carries his shoulders.”

From a shadowy corner of the veranda, Guimó peered hopefully into the visitor’s face. Maybe this man would be his friend; maybe he also had something new and splendid to bring into life even as Angela had had — and as the rest of the glad-faced multitude would have — the multitude whom he had heard calling that day on the mighty *cordillera*’s crest.

It was the face of a young man, blinded by youth’s own intolerance. And youth is intolerant. Here came one who in his zeal would drive all before him, for he had not yet learned to trudge patiently ahead, drawing men in his wake by ringing a little bell called love. It takes years to learn that. And he was young.

Abao, if this were only the gentle-faced, white-haired old man, the good Father in Kalakan whom Guimó had watched longingly from a distance during those impatient days in the tailor’s shop! He knew how well the white-haired Father loved his brown people and understood them. The tailor had often spoken of it.

Padre Miguel proudly ascended the broad stairway, the tramp of soldiery in his feet. On the topmost step he paused and extended a burly hand.

Before Guimó's astonished eyes, Angela and Señora Concha dropped to their knees, crumpling their stiff beflowered *sayas*,* and on the burly hand pressed a kiss. A custom of the women, no doubt! The friar then moved toward him, for he stood back unobtrusively near Angela's suspended orchids.

"Surely a man must not kiss that hand," ran Guimó's thoughts quickly; so he clasped the extended hand in his own and shook it honestly. The friar's face flushed darkly. Then in his little world of inexperience, he pulled his hand free and struck the face of the brown boy a pitiless blow.

"Down on your knees," he muttered. "Down on your knees, insurrecto, mountaineer, savage, whatever you may be! That is your place, as long as I am a white man and a good son of Spain!"

"Get on your knees to me!" cried Guimó, just as he would have done up on the volcano-side. His brown face was tingling with pain; and he had not lived long down on the sugar-plains. His eyes flamed. "Get on your knees to me, I say, for the God that I worshiped up on the mountain was kind to me. He helped me. Say, O man of God, what can your God be?"

"Oh, Guimó," came Angela's plea. Beautiful, trembling, tearful, she timidly stretched her hands toward him.

*Skirts.

Padre Miguel's face was livid, as he stood there with hands clenched and twisting before the flaming-eyed lad. Old-timers on the plantations had warned him about such insolence as this.

So he cried out with a shaking voice: "Señora, it is my command that you ship this fellow back to the vile mountain which bore him. With him will travel my immortal curse!"

"No — No — No!" begged Angela, her face white and drawn. "He does not understand, dear Padre. He does not understand."

"Oh, am I not right — did I not speak the truth, Angela?" pleaded Guimó proudly.

Slowly, very slowly, she shook her head.

"Guimó," bade Señora Concha coldly, "go to your master, my husband: ask him for your wages and comply with the command of the Reverend Father. *Adios!*"

"It is just as well," murmured the man in the white robes. "The boy is dangerous. . . . It is such as he who disrupt the people and try to overthrow the government by their rebellion."

Guimó said nothing. As he walked slowly away and on down the broad stairway, Angela's heart ached to see the cloud obscuring those beloved friendly eyes.

Guimó had to go far afield in his search for Señor Concha. He found his master planning in company with a *capataz* the erection of a water wheel that would hull the rice.

"What has happened, Guimó? What brings

you? I expected by this time you would be on your way doing my errand."

Guimó gave a truthful account of his misfortune. Juan Concha sighed. Then, turning to Guimó, he said sternly:

"My boy, I want you to remain with me. When I want you to go I shall tell you. I can not bring myself to obey Spanish peasants who come twice to the Philippines, first as boorish soldiers, then as priests without understanding. That is the case with Padre Miguel. It was the mouth of a white man that said it. . . . Oh, I tell you, we miss Padre Andres, Guimó. He stayed here among us so many years." Juan Concha's voice grew gentler now. "Oh, I'm very sorry Padre Miguel could not understand. But he's young. And altogether he has not spent a year in our beautiful warm-lipped islands, and that's counting in his few months of soldiering. I think, though, the years will teach him and he will acquire understanding, Guimó, if he hasn't come as some ex-soldiers have come, seeing that in this far-away place small souls could have the great power they craved. I hope our Padre is not such a soldier. I can't believe that he is — down in my heart."

The father of Angela ceased from his sober making of little crosses in the dust. He suddenly stretched out his arm and swept with his riding whip the low, close-huddling heads of the sensitive plants, the mimosa. The dark leaflets

drooped together; the fragile branches sank down like tiny discouraged arms.

“ We are the mimosa, Guimó,” continued the master of the hacienda, “ and the power the friars possess is my whip. *Abao*, those orders, what a pity they are here, banded so powerfully together! Has not the Holy Father in Rome himself had to admonish them? It’s this power that’s not Christian, boy, this power that can be wielded by the few who love it; and that it is which fills the homes of so many of our people with mourning. . . . Oh, I’m afraid some day poor Spain will see her heedless path red with fresh blood. But she will not — she will not if she will only make haste to listen to our prayers and give us the simple secular priests that we long for, men who serve God alone, and not the welfare also of a powerful order. It is enough to serve God, as almost all of our *padres* have served Him. But the few, Guimó, who do not understand — *por Dios*, what a trail of sorrow they can leave behind them! And that poor Spain could prevent — as she will, I feel sure, some day. Then — then you will see a different people here, people whose hearts are filled with affection — for they love God’s Church — and empty of dread. Thus it stands, boy, with our beautiful islands. Many times your master has pondered the far-flung question.”

“ But,” said the *capataz* quietly, glancing hast-

ily around to see if they were alone in the brook's tiny valley, "we could arise and in a single day rid ourselves of our white conquerors."

"Talk — ridiculous talk!" scoffed Juan Concha. "That would mean another rebellion and heaven knows we don't want that. Spain moves slowly; yet I know she will hearken to us this time. . . . And now, Guimó, you may go on your errand. I shall look for you to-morrow noon."

CHAPTER XI

THE HOWLING OF MOLANG'S DOG.



WHEN, in the blaze of the next noon-day sun, Guimó trudged across the quadrangle stretching in front of the moss-spattered mansion of *Hacienda Paz*, he looked in vain for Angela. She was neither down below in the cool shadows of the *tienda* nor up on the veranda. He could see neither his master nor his master's wife. Not even a servant was in sight. He had never seen the old mansion wrapped in such ill-boding silence.

He hurried up the broad stairway, his heart beating fast. Just inside the door of the great *sala*, he found his master sitting motionless, head between hands.

"Oh," came Juan Concha's startled voice. "Oh, Guimó, I'm glad you've come."

"What — what —" Guimó dreaded to hear the sound of his own great question.

"Poor Angela lies on her bed, burned up by a pernicious fever."

Angela's mother passed through the *sala*. She threw a shuddering glance in Guimó's direction and greeted him coldly.

“ I wish,” sighed Juan Concha, “ Angela’s mother would spend less time in front of her glittering altar and more at the side of our darling. But the home of her heart is that altar. She loves it better than she loves Angela or me or all her people. Many is the time Padre Andres reproached her for kneeling such long hours in that room. ‘ “ My little children — ” ’ he used to say, ‘ these words of St. John are very precious to me, Señora — “ my little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in *deed* and in *truth*. ” ’ ” ’ ”

“ Oh, how gladly I should care for the sick one! ” murmured Guimó. To him it seemed as though the great *sala* mockingly echoed his softly-spoken words.

A black shadow fell across the *sala* doorway. A young laborer stood there, the perspiration rolling from his cheeks, his wet clothing clinging to him.

“ Well? ” asked Juan Concha eagerly.

“ I found the physician,” answered the young man, “ in the *convento* with Padre Miguel. When I told the physician that you needed him straight-way, the Padre spoke up and said that you could wait — wait till you chose to obey him, as a good Christian should. Then he said that the Lord would not hold his anger forever.”

“ He speaks the truth. . . . And the physician? ” asked Juan Concha.

“ The physician answered lightly that he was

busy, that he had enough loyal people to doctor. That is what he said, Señor. Then he said that he was very sorry and the friar scowled."

"You may go, Damasio," said Juan Concha very quietly.

"Oh, I understand—I understand, Señor Juan," Guimó spoke very slowly as the truth dawned on him. "I will say *adios* to you now, master, and you can send your messenger with the word that you have obeyed. Then the physician will come."

"No—no, Guimó; you must stay here. Again and again poor Angela has asked if Guimó had come back. In her burning fever, she is waiting to see you—you would not disappoint her."

"But what—what can we do for a physician, master? Is there no other?"

"Yes, forty miles away across the channel. By the time he arrived here, he could—he could not help us." The father spoke monotonously, despondently.

"I still believe there is a merciful God, master, for you and me—for those who fight bravely," proclaimed Guimó fervently, his eyes lighting up.

"You are right. It is in God's hands," replied Juan Concha hopelessly.

"And in mine," added Guimó, but no one heard him.

Angela's father led him to the door where lay the low-stricken beautiful star. Outside the wide window of this room the green branches

of an *ilang-ilang* tossed, and the breeze that blew across the room carried the exquisite perfume to the boy waiting outside the half-open door. Juan Concha stepped out and whispered to Guimó that Angela was asleep.

All that afternoon as Guimó urged on the workmen out in the cane fields, he puzzled and frowned and ran his fingers through his thick hair. Why in the world could he not remember the names of those two plants used by the people up on the volcano-side to cure their fevers? Many times he had heedlessly listened to the names of them and now when the life of the maiden of maidens hung upon them, he could not resurrect the magic words. The more he frowned, the farther away the names seemed to fly.

All that evening he sat in a corner of the great dark *sala*, his eyes fixed uncomprehendingly upon the shaft of light that streamed all laden with perfume from the door of Angela's room. Angela's mother, for a moment leaving off praying in front of her blazing altar, had caught him standing with eager hands outside the door.

"Keep out," she had commanded, making short shrift of the appeal in the friendly brown eyes. "Keep out. To the demons besetting my unfortunate daughter I do not desire to add a pagan like yourself. Do you, a creature under a curse, long to touch Angela and to kill her with your touch? If not, take yourself to your corner."

And Juan Concha, the father, had each time

suggested to the eager-hearted boy that he wait another hour.

At last, Guimó's eyes grew heavy and the muscles of his tired body ached. So, throwing an affectionate good-night glance at the perfume-laden shaft of light and all — all that it signified, he departed to his own room, threw himself on his massive bed and straightway dropped off to sleep.

Some time in the dead of night, he was awakened by a tapping on his door. Wide awake in an instant, he swiftly arose, possessed by a mysterious dread and then on his way to the door the longed-for names flashed up from his subconsciousness. Now he could go to the fields and procure her medicines — the bark of the dita tree and the pulp of the tamarind.

“She is asking for you, Guimó, for the twentieth time. Come along with me,” murmured Juan Concha when Guimó flung open his door.

At last, Guimó crossed the perfume-laden shaft of light. There lying under a purple and yellow canopy formed by the mosquito-bar draped from the tester, her white clothing and the white sheet contrasting powerfully with the purple and yellow grass of the sleeping-mat, the beloved Angela tossed and moaned. Guimó came up and stooped compassionately over the edge of the ponderous bed. The parched lips broke into a glad little smile and the glowing eyes, now unnaturally bright, looked up pleadingly into his.

“ You were right, Guimó,” she murmured thickly. “ You were right — about your God.”

“ Poor Angela,” his caressing words refreshed her like a tumbler of cold water, “ I am glad you told me. . . . But go to sleep like a good girl. When you awaken, you will see me here with the dita bark and the pulp of the tamarind and those will quench the fire that consumes you, my beautiful star.”

“ I cannot sleep. It is so hot. It is so hot. Won't you open the window wide — wide, Guimó? ”

He went to the window where a meager crack let the perfume of the *ilang-ilang* surge in, and shoved the heavy panels far apart.

“ You can not do that, Guimó,” Juan Concha spoke up reproachfully. “ Shut the panels quickly or the hungry witch-ghosts will fly in on the deadly air.”

“ No — no — let me breathe the air,” moaned Angela. “ Guimó — will guard the window.”

“ Rest secure, Angela,” declared Guimó, “ in your faith that nothing but the sweet air shall enter here.”

“ Can you? ” asked Juan Concha doubtfully.

“ I can — I can! ”

The chill breeze flowed in at the window where Guimó stood on guard.

“ How hotly the lamp burns! ” Though Angela only whispered the words, the ear of her young lover caught them. “ How hot! . . .

How hot! Oh, I wish that the lamp would go out! ”

Guimó left his window a moment and blew out the light.

“ This is very foolish,” scolded Juan Concha. “ It is very unwise to sit here in the darkness.”

Guimó, standing by the window, stared up unthinkingly — he knew not how long — at the glowing stars visible between the *ilang-ilang*’s fragrant branches.

Then, from the south, came the long, long dolorous howl of a dog. That hideous woeful crescendo froze the throbbing blood of both the old man and the young.

“ Oh, Guimó,” cried Angela thickly, “ it is the dog of *Molang*. He is hungry for my spirit. He will carry it away to his master.”

“ No, no, Angela. *Molang*’s dog shall not enter here.”

“ Aren’t you afraid? . . . He is so big — and black — and strong, Guimó.”

“ But I, your friend Guimó, can drive him away. I defy him to draw near to my beautiful star.”

Again the long unearthly howl arose. Guimó shook with the cold. He turned, nevertheless, and said hopefully: “ You see — the dog of *Molang* dares draw no nearer.” Under his breath, he added: “ My beautiful star fighting in the cruel mist! ”

Thus began his battle against the weird dog that bears away men’s spirits when they die.

When the creeping hours finally let the dawn come in, Angela was sleeping restlessly. Guimó could hear Angela's mother muttering orisons in front of the altar that blazed in an adjoining room. Angela's father sat nodding in his basket-like armchair. Then Guimó pulled out of his pocket a substance resembling yellow moss and gently hid it under the pillow of the suffering one.

"Make her well," he commanded the substance in a whisper, "and do not delay, O powerful charm from the teak-wood tree."

He crept out of the house. The *cordillera* showed a black, jagged silhouette against the dawn-touched sky. Guimó was filled with wonder at the dimness in which his life in the Negritos' cup-like valley had already become enshrouded. His thoughts flew across the volcano to thank Forest Vine for coaxing her brother, Boulder, to share the powerful charm with him.

He trudged miles to reach the spot where the dita grew. As he stripped the milk-bleeding bark from its branches and piled it up in a heap, the sun rose higher and higher. That task done, he set out in search of a tamarind tree. First, he met a *cargador*,* a simple-minded *tao*, pattering along on a dog-trot, his pair of buckets brimming with frothy *tuba* and balancing at the ends of the *tuang-tuang*† across his shoulder.

"Friend," asked Guimó, "where does the tamarind grow?"

*Porter.

†A yoke.

“ *Ambut,*”^{*} replied the *cargador* trotting on.

“ These *taos* never know,” growled Guimó.

Next, he met a fat Chinese imperturbably breaking the back of the patient pony he rode.

“ *Chino,*” called Guimo, “ where does the tamarind grow? ”

“ *Ambut,* Señorito,” rumbled the *Chino*’s voice as he prayed his pony to make haste.

Finally, Guimó met a little old woman whose hobbling feet and shriveled hands gave warning of the terrible leprosy, and to his question, she replied: “ Son, I know where the tamarind grows.”

The tamarind grew by the side of the catacombed wall of the cemetery in Majayjay and Majayjay reposed yonder where the bell-tower gleamed dazzlingly in the tropical sun.

Guimó walked the ten miles to Majayjay. Late in the afternoon he stood at the foot of the tamarind tree where in the lacy, airy foliage the crooked pods awaited his hand. From a small boy in a house near by he borrowed a long pole and proceeded to tear the tamarinds down, each one falling like a great cool drop to dull the fire that consumed Angela.

“ Padre Fernando! Padre Fernando!” whispered the small boy at Guimó’s heels when he spied a white-robed figure slowly walking down the grassy street. “ Maybe he will scold us.” The small boy sought safety behind the hibiscus aflame in his own tiny yard. Guimó, however,

^{*}I don’t know.

continued striking at the tamarinds and tearing them down. He could suffer no delays in this race with the black dog of *Molang*.

The white-robed figure was now very near to him. Guimó rested his long pole on the ground. "Ah," thought he, "this man worships my God, the blessed God of mercy." Patient lips, a face of deep shadows, a brow serene, gentle eyes that had learned mortality and how to understand, all shone with the inward light that marks the servant of the Good Shepherd. When this man extended his hand, Guimó gladly dropped on his knee and pressed a fervent kiss upon the wan fingers. A friar after his own heart! Then, with a fleeting smile, Padre Fernando walked past the tamarind tree.

"Are you sorry that I am taking the tamarinds?" called Guimó whimsically.

"Broken-hearted," replied Padre Fernando, his countenance brightening strangely, as though buoyant youth had come back to him.

"White men are good and white men are bad — just like the brown ones," Guimó thought as he watched the white-robed figure draw farther and farther away down the gloomy road.

Close upon the hour of midnight, Guimó saw looming up before him the dusky shapes of the orange trees and the low-spreading roofs of *Hacienda Paz*. Behind the still branches of the *ilang-ilang* the tiny conch panes of Angela's window gleamed like pearls.

“ The hot lamp is burning again,” he sighed.

From the south arose the long-drawn howl of a dog and the terror of the sound put strength into Guimó’s weary, lagging footsteps.

He flew up the broad stairway and crashed into the bolted door. Presently, from the other side of the door came a low voice.

“ Who is there? ”

“ It is I, Guimó.”

With a hurried groan, someone withdrew the bolt and Guimó, laden with dita bark and tamarinds, fell into Juan Concha’s arms.

“ And Angela? ” Guimó asked in a whisper.

“ *Aba*, much weaker, Guimó. The fever is raging. I am afraid — I am afraid — ”

“ No! ” cried the lover vehemently. “ No! . . . No! ”

Before he slept, he carefully steeped the dita bark in a small clay kettle aperch one of the big flock of iron tripods in the sooty kitchen. While the dita bark was steeping, he lovingly removed the pulp from half a dozen of the tamarind pods. Again and again he looked for the glow of the sunrise, so slow seemed the brisk little flame in extracting the strength of the dita bark.

At last, he had the precious medicines prepared. Through the shaft of light and into the perfume-laden room he bore them.

“ Angela! ” he exclaimed, terrified at the drawn, burning face. Quick as a flash, he added: “ I have brought you life.”

“ I — missed — you — so, Guimó,” she whispered faintly. “ I — missed — you. I — I — ”

From the south, again resounded that long, long woeful howl.

“ The — hungry — dog — of — *Molang*,” were the words that formed themselves so piteously on the parched lips.

“ But he is like every other dog, Angela. Throw a fire-brand at him and he will scurry off crying.”

“ A — spirit — dog, Guimó.”

“ I care not if he is a spirit dog. I can make him run off crying with pain.”

With wonderful tenderness, Guimó gave her to drink of the steeped dita bark and fed her three spoonfuls of tamarind pulp. Then he blew out the hot-burning lamp and opened wide the window and took his stand there in the pervading perfume of the *ilang-ilang* to fend off the deadly spirits of the night. . . . Very gently the morning came as though it would not awaken the weary boy sound asleep in his seat on the window-sill.

He awakened, feeling that hostile condemnatory eyes were trying to fathom his thoughts. Señora Concha turned away when she saw his eyes, so friendly and so beseeching.

“ Go, fortunate pagan,” her low voice bore no hint of sympathy, “ and leave a Christian girl to meet her God as she may. Foolish youth, do you believe these witchcraft cures you have concocted can sway the will of God? ”

Angela's mother picked up the two cups of

medicine prepared by Guimó's wearied hands and flung them crashing through the branches of the *ilang-ilang*.

"*Aba!*" Up from the depths of his heart arose the cry of disappointment.

"The door stands open," Angela's mother curtly reminded him.

Had she noticed the tired bedraggled boy making his way bewilderedly out of the room, she would have seen the youthful head thrown back courageously but she could never have heard the passionate vow that his love would heal the sick one.

Guimó first sought Juan Concha and begged to borrow a wooden chest with a good strong lock. The master, learning the use to which the chest was to be put, himself helped the lover smuggle one out of the room of the blazing altar. In this strong chest, now half-hidden under Guimó's ponderous bed, the *mantio's* son locked his dita bark and tamarind pods. From this stronghold, he would sally out with healing for the sick.

"And here is the key," said Juan Concha. "May the true God be with you as you serve at poor Angela's side. If her mother sends you away again, you must not obey her. . . . I am afraid God searches the heart to see what love the suffering have stored there in their gratitude. And what is in your heart, Guimó, will prove many and many a time more powerful than my señora's incessant praying before her beloved altar."

THE CONTRARY DEER



THOUGH the dog of *Molang* still howled night after night, a day soon came when the fever burned less fiercely. The girlish figure lying so still on the purple and yellow sleeping-mat was piteously wan and frail. "The fever is dying," thought Guimó and gave thanks to the strength of the dita and the tamarind. "The fever is dying," thought Angela weakly and gave thanks in low-spoken words to the love that had worked the miracle.

One midnight, while Guimó sat on guard in the wide-open window where the perfume surged sweeter than incense, and while Juan Concha sat wearily in his arm-chair in a far corner, Angela asked Guimó to sing some little song. So he fetched his guitar and sang "Love's Happiness."

*"Gugma ñga ginkalipayan
Sa sulud sang dughan! . . .
A-hay — A-hay — A-ha-ay!
Masubu ñga pamatian."*

"Why do you pause?" asked Angela anxiously.
"It brings back days that are dead, my beauti-

ful star." Guimó's voice was unsteady and his mind full of thoughts of his *nanai* slowly waving her kerchief from the deck of the pirate boat, of old Felipe now asleep in the cool earth of the volcano-side, of weird nights in the cup-like valley of Forest Vine's black people, of Angela enthroned in the cool shadows of the *tienda*.

" *Masubu ang panumduman*
*Kay di pa niya nasayuran** . . . "

Guimó sang bravely on, now to prove that the song of "Love's Happiness" could soar above the long, long cry that arose from the dismal south. As he sang, his eyes never left the frail white figure huddled on the ponderous bed. And then he knew that his song had triumphed, for Angela — he saw — had not heard the long, long cry of the dog of *Molang*.

Another night, when the entire household save Juan Concha and himself was sleeping, he told Angela the folk-lore story of *Banag*, the snail, and *Usa*, the deer.

"I fed a pet deer once, Guimó, and I have loved it ever since," sighed Angela. "The creature makes one very happy."

"Where did you see it?" asked the lover quickly.

"At Señor Camansi's on *Hacienda Esperanza*, but that — that was before my father and he be-

*His thoughts lay deep in gloom
For he did not understand.

came enemies. *Abao*," she sighed again, " it was a beautiful tame deer."

Next morning, while the dew still hung in heavy sparkling drops on the cogon, the faithful Guimó set out for *Hacienda Esperanza*. Through his mind tripped the pleasant thought that the deer would make his beautiful star well and happy. He had clad himself in the short ragged breeches, the threadbare *camisa*, the faded, mushroom-shaped *soroc* of a poor *tao*. His errand would be fruitless if a man on *Hacienda Esperanza* recognized in him a *capataz* of Juan Concha's. To travel in this fashion with the wind blowing against his body and the feel of the warm earth beneath his feet brought back a taste of the old days.

Before the morning was half over, he arrived at *Hacienda Esperanza*. A lady smoking a cigar such as only the rich smoke was busying herself in the bright formal garden in front of the big rambling mansion. And there, a long way beyond her, daintily stepped the deer tethered to a guava tree.

" Where is Señor Camansi? " whined Guimó in the native dialect.

" He is upstairs at his desk," answered the lady as she calmly crushed a centipede with her slipper. " Go up."

Guimó went up the stairs and halted meekly in the doorway of the room where Señor Camansi sat sweating over his figures.

“What do you want?” asked the señor gruffly.

“Hoping for your mercy, Señor,” whined Guimó, “I would like to buy the deer.”

“*Car-r-r-r-r-ramba!*” rattled the *hacienda*’s owner. “That deer has been in my family five years.”

“Alas!” lamented Guimó. “I come from the mountain and the surgeon there who drives out the evil spirits says that my wife will die if she cannot drink the saliva of the deer for two weeks. What, Señor, is the price of the deer?”

“That surgeon is a fool,” exclaimed Señor Camansi, folding his hands over his great abdomen.

“But my wife believes in him and, alas, she will die if she cannot have a deer.”

“You are young,” growled the owner, “and you can more easily get another wife than I can get another deer.”

“But I love her, Señor,” cried Guimó so realistically that the tears which he wanted to flow just then flowed, indeed, with unexpected obligingness.

“Poor bedamned sinner,” scolded Señor Camansi, moved in spite of himself.

“What is the price of the deer?” asked Guimó brokenly.

“What have you got?”

“Two dollars Mex, Señor.”

“Powerful God! Two dollars Mex for that deer!”

Guimó considered two dollars Mex a safe amount for a poor *tao* like himself to possess. A greater sum might arouse suspicion of some sort.

"That is all, merciful Señor," he begged.

"Well, you can't have the deer. Better save the money for your next wedding."

Guimó was taking out of his pocket a worn handkerchief. He advanced to the desk and untied the small bundle. Señor Camansi stared unbelievably at the mixture of gold nuggets and rice grains that glittered there before him.

"How many of these must you have?" asked Guimó humbly.

"Tell me where you found the nuggets," answered Señor Camansi greedily, "and I shall give you the deer and a pony besides."

"Alas, Señor, an aged man gave them to me before he died."

"And you mean to say you didn't ask where the gold came from?"

"Why should I ask? Have I not enough gold now?"

"Well, if that isn't the damned Filipino of it!"

Señor Camansi picked out three of the largest nuggets and fondled them in his fat palm.

"Go down and take your deer."

Guimó tied up the precious nuggets that remained and went down the stairs. He found the lady blowing smoke in the deer's face. When he untied the deer, the lady's mouth dropped open.

Before she could speak, however, a head bobbed out of an upper window and a voice roared out: "That's all right, Antonia. I've sold the deer."

"Oh, you fat old fool!" she cried, snapping the ashes of her cigar into the heart of a rose.

"Are you sure, *tao*," called the roaring voice from the upper window, "that you don't know where the nuggets came from?"

"From the place," shouted Guimó wearily, "where the golden carabao comes out to drink, they say."

"I don't wonder your wife is dying," roared Señor Camansi's parting shot.

Guimó was contentedly leading his handsome deer toward *Hacienda Paz* and Angela. He breathed freely and smiled happily, now that he was a good mile from *Hacienda Esperanza*. The deer, however, proceeded vexatiously, wishing frequently to stop and nibble, and objecting to being dragged at the end of his tether-rope.

"Oh, *usa*," warned Guimó, "be careful with those little horns."

Coming toward him down the road that wound between high walls of cogon grass was a showy brass-trimmed *quilez*. Guimó crowded back against the sharp resistant blades to let the vehicle pass and hauled the deer up beside him. His heart thumped, for there, scowling out of a tiny black window, was the face of Padre Miguel, the white man who did not understand.

“ Ha,” he exclaimed, “ you have Señor Camansi’s deer. Did Juan Concha bid you steal it? ”

“ No,” answered Guimó sternly.

“ I know positively that Señor Camansi would never sell his deer — little less give it to your master. Never mind, mountaineer, I am going to spend the day on *Hacienda Esperanza* and I shall find out whether my host wanted his enemy, Juan Concha, to have the deer. Oh, you needn’t try to tell me that you wanted it for yourself. You’re no fool.”

The showy brass-trimmed *quilez* rattled on its journey and Guimó quickened his progress as best he could. Now pulling the deer, now pushing it, he hurried on in the brilliant noonday glare. At last, with the perspiration dripping off him, he reached that part of the road running through the broad fields of *Hacienda Paz*.

“ It must be nearly an hour since I passed the *quilez*,” he muttered to himself, as he stopped to give himself and Angela’s deer a moment’s respite.

Then he heard what he had long been fearing to hear — the clatter of ponies’ hoofs. Far back on the road galloped three riders in haste.

“ Come, *usa*, come,” prayed Guimó, “ or you and I shall be separated and you will find yourself back with the lady who blows smoke in your face.”

Far ahead of him shone the low-spreading roofs and the glossy-leaved orange trees of *Hacienda*

Paz. Once there, the *usa* would be safe and Angela would be happy.

By swift switching and spanking, Guimó persuaded the deer to run.

“Blessed *usa*,” he panted, rejoicing that it took his whole strength to keep up. He wished with all his might that a laborer in charge of a tumbrel and carabao would come driving out of one of the sugar fields hidden behind the tall cogon.

Always, always, bigger and yet a little bigger grew the buildings and the trees of *Hacienda Paz*, after the manner of a drowsy person stretching. At the same time, the clatter of galloping hoofs sounded minute after minute nearer and nearer. Guimó looked neither to the right nor to the left as the *usa* and he sped on. All the fire of the noonday sun was pouring down on the narrow roadway shooting between the great walls of cogon.

“Can we make it, *usa*? ” asked Guimó as he listened to the louder clattering of hoofs. It sounded loud and determined even above the choking sounds of his own hard breathing.

All at once, the *usa* stopped dead in its tracks for it had spied a carabao and cart turning into the narrow road ahead. “It will take me three minutes to reach that cart,” said Guimó grimly. Slap and scold as he might, he could not startle the deer into running. “You fool *usa*!” he cried in his anxiety.

There was but one thing in the world to do.

This he did. That deer which was as heavy as the biggest dog on the island, he picked up in his arms. The nearer-growing clatter of hoofs infused into him the needful strength to send him trotting, *usa* and all, toward the creeping carabao cart.

He was gaining on it. The three horsemen were likewise gaining on him. Guimó had no breath with which to shout to the listless driver on the tumbrel's seat. The sight of that dull *tao* so calmly sitting there and plodding on and never once turning his sluggish head filled him with an ire that did its share also toward spurring him on. "A world of fools," thought Guimó burningly, "and I'm their king."

"A-hay there — stop!" shouted the foremost of the three horsemen.

By this time, the *tao* had pulled up his carabao and Guimó had but a few long strides yet to take. Into the cart, Guimó tumbled the deer and himself.

"Gallop, Alejandro, gallop," he gasped. "Use your whip, for God's sake!"

Guimó could now distinguish plainly the shouts of all three horsemen. The screeching Alejandro had his fat, big-bellied puffing carabao running in its short-legged but swift fashion.

"On, Alejandro, on," cried Guimó. "We'll get there yet."

Now the horsemen were up with the wildly-lurching tumbrel.

"Give us that deer," commanded one of the

horsemen. "You can have your money back. . . . Our master and his wife are fearfully angry. . . . We must take back the deer or —"

"It is my private deer. It's paid for and you can't have it," Guimó replied logically. "What are you? Highway robbers?"

"We dare not return without the deer," complained another horseman.

"Then you'll never return," Guimó assured him.

"Señor Camansi's face will be more purple than it is now."

"We have the money for you."

"*Aba-a-a-a!*" retorted Guimó in the peculiar, high-pitched, disdainful exclamation of the Filipinos.

"We must take it then," said the oldest of the three horsemen. He attempted to dash past the tumbrel in order that he might get far enough ahead to stop the puffing carabao. Guimó, however, snatched the whip from Alejandro's hand and dealt his mount such a stinging blow across the face that the pony pivoted terrified. The stopping of the carabao would mean no less than the end of Angela's deer.

Alejandro had seized one of the heavy tumbrel stakes and was wielding it discriminately on the carabao's broad back. Guimó, with one hand clutching the deer's collar, kept his switch hissing — first at one hard-driven pony, then at another,

sometimes at two of them, sometimes at all three of them, as rush after rush was made. The horsemen could not pass the tumbrel and halt the wheezing carabao. No terrified pony could be urged past that barricade of singing, hissing, agony-bearing lashes.

Now the lurching tumbrel had drawn within sound of the sleepy humming of the *hacienda* buildings. Guimó's weary arm was throbbing, for on it showed many an ugly welt from a riding whip. He braced himself, nevertheless, as valiant as ever, his one hand clutching the deer's collar. Then with a long deep sigh, he saw the three horsemen hastily turn their ponies and gallop away. *Hacienda Paz* was rising there before them too forbiddingly.

Up the broad stairway leading to the veranda, Guimó carried the deer.

"Now behave," he whispered to it, as he set it down inside the door of the great *sala*. The *usa*, however, hung back, but in vain, for it slid with startling ease across the broad, shining floor. Angela's mother, hearing the queer noise, stopped in the middle of a prayer and sped to the door. Such a ragged, dust-covered, tao-like figure beneath its faded *soroc*, she had never set eyes on and it was dragging, *aba*, a beautiful deer into Angela's room.

"'Sus Maria Santissima! Lin-ti!*" My floor!" she ejaculated in a single breath. "Stop!" she

*Thunder blast it!

commanded but Guimó and the deer went right on into Angela's room.

Juan Concha sprang up from his armchair. When Guimó snatched off his *soroc*, he heard his master laugh.

“ *Dios mio*, Guimó! What — ”

“ Here's the deer, Angela,” said Guimó gently as he drew it up to the side of the ponderous bed. “ Now love it.”

“ I shall love it, Guimó,” she answered in her weak little voice, “ for you brought it to me.” She stretched out a wan hand and happily stroked the smooth velvety face and peered into the big limpid eyes.

“ He is a friendly deer, Angela, but very contrary.”

“ He must have been, Guimó,” sighed Angela. “ What a sight you are! ”

Guimó was happy when he saw a delighted smile overspread the pinched face. And when she laughed ever so tinily, his heart bounded.

“ On his little antlers, beautiful star,” he murmured, “ our *usa* will toss the black dog of *Molang*.”

While he told the story of his escapade from beginning to end, before his eyes Angela appeared to gain strength. Juan Concha chuckled gleefully and called him an odd one.

CHAPTER XIII

CHRIST'S LITTLE BIRD.



ONE day, the burning fever vanished and Angela's fight for strength began. Still, on many a perfume-laden night, the long howl of a dog arose gloomily from the south. And every day Guimó brought the deer — in spite of Señora Concha's protestations — to the side of the ponderous bed and bade Angela caress it. Sometimes Guimó forgave it its contrariness and stroked it, too.

Once, when the villagers were speaking of the slowness with which Angela's strength came back, Guimó heard a very stooped and very gray old man — who, the villagers declared, had lived a hundred years — say that a broth made from the flesh of a bleeding-heart pigeon would impart with amazing quickness the strength of youth to a wasted body.

“ I am going over the foothills to the *cordillera*, Angela,” announced Guimó that same day, “ and find a bleeding-heart pigeon for you.”

“ That is not sensible, friend.”

“ But I want my beautiful star to regain her strength and not linger in this region where the

dog of *Molang* stalks. I shall come back quickly. I know one place where the bleeding-heart has nested for many years and no one can lay a better snare than I."

"But the danger —"

"There is none — for me, Angela, when I do things for you. I have my *mutia* at my side always."

So Guimó hastened over the foothills and up into the forest. At the end of the second day he arrived at the wide glade where the bleeding-heart pigeon lived in the creaking bamboos.

"Ah, *Paloma*," he greeted the beautiful bird which sat with its mate high up in a plumelike bamboo tree, "you must die for the sake of Angela, the beautiful star."

The cricket, the *sirum-sirum*, piped briskly, for it was now the hour that gave it its name, the hour of twilight.

Before the darkness stole over the volcano and locked up the people in their distant tiny houses, Guimó had laid and baited his many snares and had withdrawn — after uttering a prayer to all the supernal beings that peopled the mighty forest. In its tremendous shadows which enfolded him like the wings of a gigantic bat, he slept that night. His sleep was sound. He had learned that the mighty forest, the unseen people, and the darkness, were all three friends who would not betray him.

At noon, the next day, he made the rounds of

his snares. His heart leaped when he saw in one a captive pigeon, its wings fluttering and beating in terror.

“The volcano, too, is my friend,” he said to himself there in the silent glade, “for it has so quickly given me the bleeding-heart.”

He took the beautiful pigeon in his strong hands and his gladness suddenly vanished, for all that he could feel was the trembling and the piteous frightened beating of a heart.

“It does not understand,” he mused, shaking his head. “And there are many things which I, too, cannot understand. Poor *Paloma*, you must die—for somebody else. . . . Don’t tremble so. You frighten me—you seem like my poor beautiful star, *Paloma mia*.”

Guimó thoughtfully shut the beautiful bird up in the bottle-shaped rattan cage which he had waiting and carried it away from its mate in the glade and carried it from its home on the volcano-side.

“Your home is not a fine one, *Paloma*,” he said, as he trudged along. “Is it also rough and flat? Were you, too, gazing at the moon and calling: ‘*Tok—mo!* . . . *Tok—mo!* . . . *Tok—mo!*’ when God sent his wise bird to tell all the birds of the world how to make their nests?”

“I wish you would tell me, *Paloma*, about those feathers in the middle of your shining white breast. Who dipped them in fresh blood? Gray is your back, gray your wings and as white as

foam your breast. Why does your heart bleed and stain your lovely breast forever? I wish you could tell me, little *Paloma*."

Guimó was hurrying up and down and around the foothills which lay prostrate like so many cowering slaves before the great volcano. As he followed the twisting trail to the summit of a steep foothill, his dreams suddenly dropped dead. Before him he saw winding up the trail to the very summit on which he stood, two Tagalog soldiers of the *Guardia Civil*, their burnished rifles slung across their backs. They were so near that Guimó could distinguish across the face of one of them an ugly scar reaching from jaw to cheek bone. In a flash, that night when old Felipe died and he had fought for his right to the beautiful world came back to him. That scar showed where Guimó's own valiant bolo had swung.

"*Aba*, he lived," breathed Guimó despairingly. "By the *mutia* in my pocket I command him not to recognize me."

Guimó dared not seek refuge in the waving cogon or in the gnarled bushes that edged the ravine, for the soldiers had seen him plainly the moment he touched the summit, the moment he stood there outlined against the sky. Accordingly, he continued wisely down the trail, his bottle-shaped basket in his hand.

In this borderland between the *cordillera* and the first shy little farms, the *Guardia Civil* kept

its closest watch. In that brief jaunt from the summit to the advancing soldiers, Guimó reproached himself a thousand times for having proceeded so blindly. Should he be challenged and recognized, he would never again see the low-spreading roofs and the glossy orange trees of *Hacienda Paz*, and Angela would be waiting such a long, long time for him.

Calmly he came face to face with the soldiers and calmly he turned out to let them pass. Then the soldier with the terribly scarred cheek placed himself directly in front of Guimó and Guimó looked insolently into the bitterly-scowling eyes.

“Let me pass,” asked Guimó.

“There is no haste,” answered the soldier imperturbably.

“But I am bearing health to one that is weak unto death.”

“There is no haste!” repeated the soldier, but this time his voice betrayed a vague tremor.

“Let me pass,” asked Guimó. “It is no pleasure to stand here pierced by your eyes.”

“There is no haste!” murmured the soldier, his eyes brightening in triumph.

“Let me pass, I say,” cried Guimó wildly. “I am no mouse.”

“All right, pass,” bade the soldier, seizing his rifle and bringing it to his shoulder. “Get on your way. I’ll give you twenty-five paces in which to make your peace with the devil.”

“Look here,” interposed the other Tagalog.

“Do you by shooting this boy want to put the hempen rope around my neck also?”

“*Hepos*,” commanded the soldier with rifle at aim. “It will be easily explained. This is the boy that killed Corporal Montilla. This is the boy that gave me this scar. He is naught but an outlaw.”

“O-ho!”

Guimó took but five steps of the twenty-five allotted him. Then he turned and faced the gaping muzzle and the two motionless soldiers. He slowly raised his arm in the gesture of a prophet delivering a curse. There, between thumb and forefinger, the soldiers beheld the dull glow of a pearl.

“My *mutia*!” Guimó’s words carried portent.

“My *mutia*, my pearl.”

The listening soldiers frowned apprehensively.

“My *mutia*, the gift of a giant from whom a fair victory was wrested. Behold it. Behold it and remember when this drops from my fingers, for every beat of your terrified hearts, a frothing *baua** will come hurtling down from the bosom of my mighty friend, the volcano. These *baua* will devour your bodies until not one drop of blood remains to mark the spot where you this moment stand. They will devour your bodies and plunge your souls into the volcano’s eternal fire.”

Notwithstanding the matter-of-fact-ness of their Spanish rifles, notwithstanding their duti-

*An evil bird with magic powers of transformation.

fully acquired earmarks of civilization, the two soldiers quaked and cried out for mercy. In the lowlands they had been born, with a tremendous fear of the mysterious mountains. And, as Guimó well knew, none but lowlanders ever descended to become soldiers of Spain's broad empire.

"Do you think," demanded Guimó sternly, "that I would live year in and year out with my ear to the volcano's bosom without learning her secrets? Shoot, soldier, and bear in mind that when my body falls, the *mutia* drops."

"Come, let us go," the companion suggested tremblingly.

The scarred soldier let his rifle sink to the ground.

"I can not shoot this time," he muttered, "but I can arrest you."

"But touch me," warned Guimó, "and you will see the *mutia* drop. My friends of the forest are restlessly waiting. Would you like to see them?"

"No, no, in the name of God!"

"Then march over the hill. With this pearl in my hand, I shall follow you to the summit."

The soldiers obeyed. Guimó, still holding high the pearl, stood on the summit of the foothill and watched his enemies slowly disappear over a distant ridge.

"Thou art, indeed, a *mutia*," he addressed the pearl as he thrust it back into its receptacle. "And, *Paloma*, we must hasten. Angela is waiting."

“ Its little heart is bleeding,” Angela murmured as she peered at the pigeon in its rattan cage. Guimó had set the cage down beside her on the purple and yellow sleeping-mat.

“ It will give you strength, Angela.”

“ You are so good to bring it, Guimó. But you must not kill it. Ever in the great forest it flies about telling to the trees the story of the bleeding heart of Christ.”

“ But your strength, beautiful star? ”

“ What you have done will give me strength, Guimó. We shall feed the beautiful pigeon.”

“ And some day, it can return to its mate in the lonely glade.”

“ Yes, Christ’s little bird must not mourn.”

“ I am glad, Angela. When I felt its beating heart and its soft, trembling body, I was sorry that it had to die.” Safe in the portals he kept the day-clear thought: “ For it seemed so much like you.”

“ Now, see how the merciful Christ guards over his own. When I am well, we shall set the pigeon free.”

“ It is glorious to be free and with one’s mate and — home.”

CHAPTER XIV

THE OTHER HALF OF THE NIGHT



ALMOST a hundred guests had banqueted in the brightly illuminated dining-hall of Juan Concha's mansion. Many a health had been drunk to the happiness of Angela. Already, she thought, her happiness was complete, for this was her very own evening. From miles and miles around and even from the large city across the channel, Juan Concha had summoned his friends to celebrate Angela's restoration to health.

Guimó, however, could not repress his own awe at finding himself in the midst of such brilliance and color. Such magnificent ladies filled the great *sala*, smoking their cigarettes coolly and strolling past the immense mirrors for the sake of a fleeting glance at their own blazing necklaces of diamonds.

Such rustlings as the voluminous trains of their gorgeous brocaded skirts made while sweeping over Señora Concha's glassy floor. Such sheer exquisite textiles as shimmered in their transparent *camisas* with the huge, bell-like sleeves and the huge stiffened kerchiefs — faintly dimming the bare brown shoulders beneath. Such a medley

of jubilant colors gleamed from every wall and corner: blues like the deep sea, greens like the shallow, scarlets like the blossoming fire tree, yellows like the sunsets over the small islands, pinks like the morning clouds over the volcano, lavenders like the twilight air. Such fabulous flowers of an undiscovered land, such fruits and birds and garlands found themselves pictured and paneled on the sweeping gala gowns. And all this was to express the world's joy at the pale Angela's return from the mists.

The orchestra stationed in one corner of the great *sala* suddenly filled the mansion with the joyous strains of a sonata. Juan Concha and his señora hastened about, getting the multitude of couples arranged in their sets for the stately *rigodon*.

Guimó saw Angela coming hurriedly toward him. How delightful she looked in her great skirt and filmy *camisa*, both sparkling and shining like a treeful of ripe lemons covered with dewdrops. Even the tips of her velvet *chinelas* gleamed — when they peeped out — with the same delicious yellow brightness.

“Dance this with me, Guimó,” she said, almost in a whisper.

“*Abao*, thunder blast it, Angela, I am afraid. I never learned this dance.”

“You who are afraid of nothing — neither devils nor death! I am astonished!”

“I do want to dance it, Angela; I do.”

"I'll help you then, Guimó. We'll dance in the second set and you can watch and see how the first set lives through it. It's quite safe."

Guimó shivered when he took his place beside Angela in one of the huge squares and saw all around him the bejeweled señoras and señoritas, cool and stately, and the rich sugar-planters and their nonchalant sons. But, then, wasn't Angela right at his side?

"This is Angela's *baile*," he thought determinedly. "I must be happy. He who would dance with a queen must comport himself like a king."

With that world philosophy in his mind, he did his sweetheart credit throughout the half hour of stately intricate figures. Besides, Angela smiled at him proudly whenever he caught her eye.

"You did splendidly," she said when the orchestra finally paused to breathe. "I am glad to see that you are still with us."

"I have much to live for since we are to dance all night."

"Oh, you can't dance all the sonatas with me."

"I can't! "

"Of course not! "

"Thunder blast it! "

"You mustn't fan me so terribly fast, Guimó. My guests will think you excited."

"I am."

"Fan like that young man over there."

“ But his señorita looks highly distressed. You shan’t look that way.”

“ Shan’t I? Do fan more slowly, just as though it were an everyday matter, or I’ll look like that señorita.”

“ Never do that, Angela.”

Angela laughed softly and moved away among her guests, leaving Guimó on a desert island. He wandered off into a corner where a group of young men were gossiping of woman and wine, and lighted a cigarette.

By and by the orchestra struck up a waltz. Angela and a wild-looking youth from the big city across the channel led off. Guimó sighed and advanced upon an unsuspecting maiden. He stopped. There in the door before him stood Padre Miguel, his white robe and stole attracting all eyes. Guimó felt his hopes fluttering earthward like the singed moths dropping from the glittering chandeliers.

Juan Concha and his señora hastened to greet the friar and to conduct him to a thronelike arm-chair. When the Padre saluted them as though nothing had happened, Guimó was glad. They must have invited the Padre or else being such a great man he had come without a special invitation. Then Guimó continued his advance upon the maiden and danced with her. He could not be downcast when Angela was so radiant.

When the dancers took their places for the

lanceros,* Guimó saw a captain and a lieutenant of the *Guardia Civil* in the line. What — Well, of course his master had summoned them to the celebration.

As an interlude between the two halves of the night, the best dancers among the guests entertained the gorgeous company by performing such special dances as the *incoy-incoy*, the *jota-jota*,† the cockroach and what not.

“ Now, Guimó,” murmured Angela, “ I have spoken to the leader of the orchestra and he will next play that mountain dance you taught me, and you and I will dance it for our guests.”

“ Oh, I’m not afraid. It will seem like home to me.”

“ Home? ”

“ Yes, and ours will be the most beautiful dance of the night, beautiful star.”

At last, the music of the mountain dance was throbbing. Guimó and Angela took their places in the middle of the broad shining floor. Of the scores and scores of brown eyes fixed upon his lithe, virile form, the lover was unconscious. Ever before him danced the two shining eyes of his resplendent partner. The castanets tinkled; the guitars and bandurias hummed enchantingly.

As Guimó knelt while Angela circled about him, he felt the burning of hostile eyes. His glance flew along the line of gorgeous ladies and stopped

*A square dance.

†Native dances.

in the shadows of the broad doorway where servants and bold workmen had quietly ventured. In the midst of them, he found the glowering countenance of the soldier with the terrible scar from jaw to cheek bone. At the meeting of their glances, Guimó saw the eyes grow slitlike in quick recognition.

“Up, Guimó,” Angela whispered, her lips scarcely stirring. “I have twice repeated my figure.”

He arose bewilderedly. He had forgotten and lost himself.

“Around me, Guimó,” implored the perplexed Angela.

Guimó did as he was bidden but his thoughts were far away and his feet and hands wooden. He watched the soldier push through the crowd in the doorway and draw the captain of the *Guardia Civil* aside. Now the captain was staring at him and smiling through the smoke.

After what seemed hours the music died down. Guimó, still bewildered, stood in the middle of the floor and listened with deaf ears to the faint applause.

Across the bare floor, the swaggering captain strode toward him. Guimó felt a hand fall on his shoulder and a loud voice intone: “In the name of His Majesty, I arrest you for the murder of Corporal Montilla!”

Guimó suddenly tingled at the breath of his beautiful world; he answered with boldness and

a gallantly assumed lack of comprehension:
“What are you driving at?”

The people so lately atilt with childlike happiness now hung spellbound. Juan Concha and his señora hurried agitatedly across the shining floor.

“You are mistaken, Captain,” protested Juan Concha angrily. The anger of a rich *hacendero** such as he often went far and accomplished much.

“Come here,” ordered the captain. The soldier with the scarred face came forward hesitatingly. “Is this the youth that struck you that night of the raid on the volcano village?”

“It is, sir.”

“Absurd!” declared Juan Concha desperately. “My *capataz* is a Manila boy. He hasn’t been on this island six months.”

“That is true,” cried Angela, though in her heart she prayed for forgiveness. No one heard her mournful whisper: “And thus my happy *baile* ends.”

“This soldier,” blustered the captain boastingly, “would certainly not forget the face of the man who came within an inch of putting him out of his misery, would he?”

“So it would seem. So it would seem. But I give you my word, Captain, that this boy is not the one you’re after.”

“But a few weeks ago this soldier with the scar,” Guimó’s voice quivered with glorious indignation, “attempted to shoot me up in the foot-

*Owner of a plantation.

hills. To-night, because I made him eat of the dust, his head burns with revenge."

Across the soldier's face swept a look of wrathful bitterness and a pain like the stab of a needle shot through his torn cheek.

"Well," muttered the braggart captain, growing doubtful and standing, moreover, somewhat in awe of Juan Concha and his wealth.

"It seems very likely," continued Juan Concha ironically, "that any human being after fighting his way to freedom would return with a price on his head—you might say just that—and live on a big, frequented plantation like this. People do not return to sit in the shadow of the garrote's iron collar and screw."

"Captain," cried the soldier tremblingly, "you have the right man. I speak the truth."

"You could be mistaken after all this interval."

"Excuse me, sir. I saw him plainly that night."

"For how long?"

"A long moment, sir, before he blew out the *quinque* and tore his way out."

"It is not the custom of bandits to come back into the world."

"I am right," exclaimed the soldier in a clear ringing voice. "The woman Juana saw him too!"

"The woman Juana! . . . Well, where is she?"

"I have no idea. Her house is rotted down."

The captain grunted.

“ Arrest this boy,” warned Juan Concha, “ and I shall complain to Manila to the governor-general of your abuse of your power. . . . My men are not outlaws. I demand no more than justice.”

Throughout that great *sala* not a rustle, not even the scratching of a match could be heard. The guests huddled dismally along the walls. Now Padre Miguel arose from his throne-like armchair and drew near to the tense group under the tinkling crystal chandelier.

“ And justice you shall have, Juan Concha,” proclaimed Padre Miguel, “ for your faithlessness to Spain.”

A cry out of heart depths broke from Angela’s quivering lips. No other sound broke the choking silence that pressed hard against the white walls of the great *sala*.

“ I believe this boy is from Manila,” continued the friar. “ His forwardness tells the tale. Therefore, Captain, let the boy go. I think I can make something of him.”

The friar smiled pleasantly at Guimó but Guimó could not understand it, for he could not read men’s thoughts.

“ And you, Juan Concha, are guilty of treason to the government. You disobeyed me in regard to this boy but I tell you this very disobedience with which you would humiliate me will prove a blessing to me and a curse to you.”

Juan Concha stood trembling, dumb with a great protesting question.

"An old woman from your village here, Juan Concha, came and told me of the rebellious gatherings night after night and of the eagerness of your workmen to rise in an insurrection and to slay the white men."

"My master did not know," pleaded Guimó. "I know he did not. Night after night he has sat by the side of Angela's bed. He could not know. Like me, he was watching and fighting off the dog of *Molang*."

Padre Miguel frowned but he swiftly bethought him of Guimó's golden secret and said: "You are the one who did not know your master."

"Blessed Mother of Compassion," moaned Juan Concha's wife.

"All right, Captain," said the friar.

The captain blew shrilly on his whistle. A dozen soldiers of the *Guardia Civil* tramped into the *sala*. There sounded the clanking of chains and the soldiers tramped out again with Juan Concha in their midst. At the door, he turned and the tragedy in his eyes as he murmured "*Adios*" to daughter and wife made Guimó fight with himself to keep from shrieking.

"Señora," said the captain, turning to the woman who stood there wringing her hands helplessly, "I am sorry but I must tell you that you and your daughter and your menials must vacate the *hacienda* at once. Confiscation of all prop-

erty is but a part of the punishment for treason. I give you until to-morrow night to gather together your strictly personal belongings and to seek another home among your relatives.”

Guimó tried to move, do something, say something, and wondered why he could not. Even when he saw Angela sink in an unconscious little heap on the floor, his muscles refused to obey. He stared dumbly at the silver spangles on her fairy-yellow dress, sparkling in the light of the tinkling crystal chandelier.

Padre Miguel was touched but he compressed his lips and thought: “It’s a hard lesson but salutary. We dare not give these treacherous rebels an inch or they’ll take a mile and drench it in our blood.”

The noise of departure and hurried confusion echoed through the quadrangle of *Hacienda Paz*. Coachmen yelled as they hitched their ponies or their cows and trotted them around to the foot of the broad stairway. Under the low-spreading roofs and among the orange trees torches flared and smoked wildly.

The guests slowly rustled out of the great *sala*. Some stared curiously at the little group under the chandelier — Guimó bending over the small crumpled-up figure in fairy-yellow, the señora wringing her hands and moaning, always moaning; a few looked at the little group with tear-dimmed eyes; many looked at the little group, in their questioning brown eyes a looming dread of

a like flash of the lightning. It was a mighty question that prayed from those eyes. Greater than the wealth of the Indies was God's particular gift of joy to them; yet under the white man's fire it vanished like steam from a kettle.

Padre Miguel went to Guimó and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Come here," he commanded.

Guimó arose dumbly and followed the white-robed friar to a quiet corner.

"To-morrow morning at eleven o'clock," Padre Miguel gave his instructions distinctly, "you will come to my *convento*. Having given you back your life, I believe you will come and repay me by leading my brother and his helpers to the gold deposit. Señor Camansi told me all about the nuggets. . . . Just remember that those mountains belong to the King of Spain, and so does the gold that lies in them."

"I do not know the place," answered Guimó.

"You will find it, then," promised the friar.

"You will find it surely."

"But," Guimó's face lighted up with eagerness, "if you — No, I will not unless you say the word and set my master free."

"I shall not say the word, mountaineer; be content that your own neck is saved. Yes, I am sure you will come, for to-night my friends are watching the trails to the *cordillera*. Bandits, you know, like to get back to their jungle. Well, it's in my hands that your life rests. I assure

you I shall not wait one moment after the bell booms out eleven. Just remember you're dealing with a white man this time. Oh, I would take you with me to-night if I weren't afraid of snakes that strike in the dark. You will come to-morrow most certainly."

"I will come," replied Guimó.

The friar strode out of the *sala*, the last of the guests to leave the moss-spattered mansion. A few servants stood around wretchedly and watched their mistress wringing her hands.

Again Guimó bent over the little figure crumpled up on the shining floor.

"Your *baile* is ended, beautiful star," he whispered, and his heart ached within him.

CHAPTER XV

THE MANTIO'S SON CROSSING SEAS



IT must be eleven o'clock in the friar's *sala*," observed Guimó as he peered back over the burrow-like *kamera** of the scudding *parao*. Within this little burrow of *nipa* thatch, Angela and her mother had wearily crawled on hands and knees and lain down to sleep from exhaustion.

With his chin on his strong hands, Guimó leaned against the low arch of the *kamera's* roof and, gazing past the brown helmsman at the tiller, studied — his eyes half-shut — the beautiful, far-reclining island where he had been born. In the indigo, cotton-flecked, tropical sea, it stretched like a vast sleeping lizard — body and jagged crest a rare hypnotic blue; narrow lateral stripe a glittering green faintly edged in white. Guimó was venturing far from the tall sharp-cragged, misty-blue mountains that he loved, far from his god-haunted mighty volcano with its wisp of smoke, far from the palm-fringed coast with its necklace of drowsy brown villages.

*A small cabin.

As noiseless as the *cordillera's* forests seemed the big unfamiliar sea, with only the soft rush of the white-crested indigo waves singing their cradle-song. Faithfully the huge leg-o'-mutton sail captured the strong monsoon and made it drive the arrow-like craft away from enemies and on to friends. Again and again the leeward outrigger crushing itself against the indigo waters groaned as the hurrying waves tore at it and strove to suck it down into the warm depths. The brown, half-naked sailors perched dizzily on the air-riding windward outrigger spoke quietly as they joked one another. In the burrow-like *kamera*, Angela slept, her hand softly resting on her mother's streaming hair.

As the *parao* scudded onward, Guimó's thoughts flew back to *Hacienda Paz*. Again he lived over their strange flight to the coast in the most death-like hours of the night. How the anxious musicians hung around for a patient hour until Señora Concha remembered to draw a sack of silver coins from its place of safe-keeping in a heavy padlocked chest, how Angela's eyes had fluttered open, how he had whispered to her the danger that beset his secret of the gold, how he had said he must take flight again like a hunted deer — all these events flashed before his eyes after the fashion of quivering lightning.

And then she had murmured: "Guimó, we shall flee with you. . . . Mamma's only brother lives in Manila. He must be there yet — though

he has not written for a year. Yes, he must be there or he would have told us."

With all the strength of the bright hopes of youth, Guimó had declared that the uncle must still be in Manila.

Señora Concha had hailed the hasty plan as their only hope and had ceased wringing her hands.

"I myself will beg the governor-general's mercy," she had cried out. "I will throw myself at his feet. Yes, we must make all haste to Manila."

Then while the flying-foxes had fought and squealed in the fruit trees, the *quilez* had been brought around, the ponies rearing under the old coachman's trembling hand. Guimó, hands and feet both flying, had helped Angela fill three or four light bamboo baskets with articles of clothing. The señora had hurried around aimlessly, remembering only to tuck her golden crucifix in the largest *tampipi*.^{*} Guimó now clearly recalled the thrill he felt when Angela had laid on top of a basketful of her own dresses a small fragment of a substance resembling yellow moss.

"May it truly make our enemies sick," he thought bitterly and a deep longing for the distant blue mountains surged up in him.

The tinkling crystal chandeliers had been still blazing and the opalescent light still gleaming from hundreds of tiny conch panes, when Angela

^{*}A large, covered bamboo basket.

and her mother had driven silently away from their great mansion, never to see it again.

Then followed the long jolting journey to the coast while the whole black island slumbered. Guimó had hurried along on foot several hundred *varas** behind the lurching quilez. He had not dared to ride lest some of the possible watchers of the friar's should trap him. On foot, he had been constantly ready and watching. He could take no risks of losing the beautiful world which old Felipe had once declared was youth's and therefore his own.

At dawn the heaving ponies had drawn into the fishing village of Kulumangan. There the ring of Mexican dollars had persuaded a fisherman to convey the three travelers to the big city across the wide channel.

The cry of the tame parrakeets aperch in the *parao*'s rigging now awakened Guimó from his reverie. But the little green-plumaged birds like unkind magicians only conjured up the friendly shadows of the giant trees in the mountain forest.

"Let nothing dare happen to me," muttered Guimó grimly, "till Angela is safe and happy."

His *parao* scudded past a large verdant island whose great cliffs were catacombed by booming caves; past dreamlike islets which long ago had seemed from Natunga's shore to float in the golden air.

*A *vara* is a little less than a yard.

Late in the afternoon, the swift *parao* was tack-
ing into the harbor of the great city whence the
three travelers would seek passage for Manila.
Almost in the mouth of the harbor a four-masted
*goleta** swayed at her anchor.

“Look you,” chattered a sailor to his compan-
ion. “The vessel is preparing to sail.”

“*Abao*, I should like to go to Manila once and
see what kind of fish they sell there.”

“The fish, simple one! For my part I should
hunt out the maidens.”

“Does that boat go to Manila?” asked Guimó
eagerly.

“Or maybe to Zamboanga. Who knows?”

“Take us to the *goleta*, sailor,” ordered Guimó.

“We are hastening to Manila.”

“What a pity, Señorito! Yesterday the weekly
steamer left for Manila. It always leaves on
Tuesdays.”

“That is why you must take us to the *goleta*.
That may be setting sail for Manila.”

“If God is willing to get us there in time. They
are unfurling the sails.”

One by one, Guimó counted the sails going
leisurely up. Nervously he watched the clamoring
bustle on deck. At last, the little *parao* plowed
up beside the big vessel.

“Where to?” shouted Guimó.

“Manila,” replied a mate stalking along the
deck.

*Large sailing vessel.

“The charm is working and God is good,” muttered Guimó.

After much peril and holding of breath, Angela and her mother thankfully found themselves hoisted on board and no longer suspended over indigo waters cut by shark fins. A few minutes more and Guimó in company with the *tampipis* was on the broad deck of the *Reina de Hispania* — Queen of Spain.

The little *parao* — well paid for — drew speedily away. The sailors ever light of heart waved their hands and called out many *feliz viajes*.

“Someone has wished us a happy voyage,” Angela sighed wearily. “Someone.”

“We must make it so, then, Angela. You are the one and I am the one and neither sea nor islands can stop us.”

“It is wonderful, Guimó, to think that you are safe.”

“For how long, I keep asking myself.”

“Always, Guimó, for when the governor-general pardons papa and gives him back the *hacienda*, we shall be married.”

A low cry escaped Guimó’s lips.

“Guimó, Guimó, what is the matter?”

The boy’s voice was bitter as he slowly said: “Angela, I can never return to our island.”

“But we can prove that you did not kill that corporal.”

He shook his head very slowly.

“ *Aba, Guimó!* ” Angela cried so despairingly that several of the sailors turned to stare.

“ I did not want to grow old in prison, Angela, — or to die. I had the whole beautiful world to be happy in.”

“ You shall have it. You shall. Something will happen that you can have it, Guimó. Did the bleeding-heart pigeon ever hope to be set free, as you and I set it free last night in all the confusion? But, you see, it was set free. By now it must be miles and miles from that orange tree.”

“ I am glad.”

“ And so is our Blessed Lord glad when he sets one of us free.”

“ He will set me free,” mused Guimó, already dreading the ceaseless vigil he would have to keep in the great capital. Always he would have to watch lest he walk into the hands of one sent to lie in wait for him endlessly, patiently.

Besides Angela and her mother and Guimó, the *Reina de Hispania* carried but four passengers, an old Tagalog and his wife and two Chinese. The *goleta's* main business was to sail heavy laden with bales of hemp and countless *bayones* of brown sugar. So it happened that Guimó made friends of the good-natured chaffering crew and joined them in their games of chance played between the windlass and the fore-hatchway.

One night, in fact it was the second night out on the trip between the big beautiful islands that

mark the path to Manila, Guimó told the story of Juan Concha's misfortune. It sounded scarcely credible, he knew, there in the center of the moon-flooded, becalmed sea hemmed in by unfathomable blue islands, there on the moon-bewitched *goleta* afloat in a sea of dreams, there where the drone of an officer's guitar pleaded for all the passionate lovers in the world.

The ends of the mariners' cigarettes now glowed like the ardent fire, now drew back beneath a choking ashen mask. Even so appeared and disappeared those thoughts that were buried deepest in the consciousness of the sailors. Again it seemed to Guimó that he was listening to and peering through a crack at such a subterranean river of fire as he had found coursing beneath the placid surface of *Hacienda Paz*.

"Some day," murmured a sailor.

"Our day," seconded another, veins standing out on his forehead where the moonlight struck it.

"Our day!"

"The day that Spain perishes in every island!"

"We might wait," ventured an oldish *marinero*.

"The white men cannot understand us. Three hundred years they have lived in our towns and on our rich plains and yet they do not understand. They can never understand."

"And so we live on, the serpent coiled sleeplessly on our breast. Again and again she strikes in alarm and a pain as of death grips our mus-

cles. I ask you which is greater — the serpent or the sleeper? ”

“ Have no fear. The sleeper is awakening.”

“ It will be a day of sunshine when the fugitives return to their little children and to their lost homes.”

Thus the talk went on and on, there by the fore-hatchway as long as the young moon lent its enchantment. Again and again Guimó said: “ I am one of you and my hands are twitching.”

The next night once more Guimó saw more clearly and heard more distinctly that slow subterranean river of fire.

The fourth night, however, the path of the moon was black with flying clouds and the *Reina de Hispania* was laboriously climbing watery hills or sinking into terrifying valleys. The waves that boiled madly down the clean-swept deck lighted up every mast, every stay, every sailor, in ghastly phosphorescent light and showed here a dying jellyfish, there a flying fish stranded and gasping. The practical-minded ship's cook watching his chance dashed out from behind the galley and gathered the storm-driven flying fish into his capacious basket.

In their tiny cabin Señora Concha and Angela knelt insecurely and prayed, the golden crucifix before them. In another cabin Guimó kept his face pressed against the small circular window and gloried in the monstrous fire-lit sea.

Two days the tropical gale fought with the sea

and the *Reina de Hispania*. Then, one morning, the travelers looked out and saw patches of blue sky running cheerily across the zenith. The waves became less boisterous. Guimó heard a sailor friend thank God and Our Lady of Good Voyage and Peace and heard him shout the words: "Manila Bay!"

Like a statue Guimó stood at the rail and peered at the low, wide-spreading city toward which the *goleta* was tediously plowing. He liked to think of all the people and of all the delights of life sheltered by those endless roofs of red tile, of gray iron, or of brown palm thatch. Roofs, roofs everywhere, the burnished crowns of palm trees, the fresh green tops of rain trees, gilded crosses, snow-white crosses on cathedral gable or convent roof, lofty domes up-rising from apses as strong as fortresses, massive towers here and yonder whence sounded the faint ringing of bells!

The sailors furled the sails and lowered the anchor. Angela and her mother, Guimó, the old Tagalog and his wife, the two Chinese, were rowed shoreward. The old Tagalog and his wife chatted garrulously. Angela, the señora and Guimó, stirred by the great teeming city and all that it portended of doom or of triumph, sat silent in the *bote*.*

Now the *bote* was carrying them into the dull Pasig River ever bearing seaward on its slow current those little green lettuce-like plants called

*Boat.

quiapo. Helplessly the *quiapo* floated past all the fine sights of the Pasig's two banks, past all the big and little boats crowding the noisy embankment like hungry ducks. On the right of the river's mouth, with its ponderous stone base licked by the lazy water, squatted old Fort Santiago, its antiquated cannons pointing fingers of warning through the deep-sunk embrasures in the parapet.

Once on the busy embankment, the groups of travelers hailed street rigs and rattled away.

"Don't forget, Guimó," a sailor spoke softly, "to meet us here at half past six or seven tonight. This is where we always bring the *bote*. We'll show you the great city which they call the 'Pearl of the Orient.' "

"Sure," answered Guimó. He picked up a last pair of *tampipis* and piled them in the *quilez* that had driven up at Señora Concha's signal.

"*Calle Recoletos, Intramuros*," ordered Señora Concha. The *quilez* lumbered off. "My brother lives on *Calle Recoletos*," she explained and fell into a deep reverie.

To Angela and Guimó, watching with fascinated eyes the bright shops, the colorful, jostling, late-afternoon traffic, the mingling nationalities from the world's four corners, the stately equipages of wealthy Tagalogs and Spanish merchants or officials, that noisy ride up the *Escolta* and across the river was a bewildering experience. Then they went rumbling across one of the moss-covered

bridges spanning the moat, and echoing through the cavern-like gate of the great wall encircling the old Spanish city. They were now rattling along the narrow streets of *Intramuros*. The upper stories of the quaint, plain old houses projected out over the echoing street. The ground floor windows always covered with heavy iron gratings, here plain as a prison's, there a bright-painted arabesque, yonder bellying over a snug little balcony, often disclosed a proud pallid face or a distinguished brown one. They were not especially beautiful, thought Guimó, these daughters of old Manila.

"*Calle Recoletos*," droned the coachman.

Señora Concha came out of her reverie and began eyeing the endless old houses.

"*Para*,"* called out the señora. The *quilez* drew up creakingly. "Wait here, Angela. This is the house of your uncle."

The señora stepped out and hurriedly disappeared in the dark entranceway.

"I am afraid, Guimó," mused Angela, crouching in a corner of the *quilez*, "afraid of these houses with the iron-barred windows."

"You needn't be, beautiful star. I shall always be around. To-morrow, you know, we go to the palace of the governor-general."

"You are so good, Guimó. I should be wholly lost without you. Mother always seems so far away and not like one of us."

*Stop.

“ Angela — ”

“ Oh, I shall be glad when we are home again. . . . Home, did I say? ” she laughed bitterly. “ Why, I’m homeless really and when our bag of dollars is gone, why — ”

“ But I — ” Guimó’s eyes were flashing again — “ I am, so my mother said, the son of a *mantio* who can cross the seas like a typhoon wind.”

“ You will never cross them — will you, Guimó — without me? ” she pleaded, gripped by a shapeless, dreadful fear.

“ No, beautiful star.”

Señora Concha was coming slowly out of the dark entranceway, her hands clasping and unclasping timidly.

“ Oh, Mother of God — Mother of God,” she moaned through the *quilez* window. “ He is gone. He and his wife are gone — almost half a year already — exiles in Hongkong or Singapore, no one knows which.”

Guimó helped the dazed woman into the *quilez* and bade the coachman drive them to some cheap hotel.

“ This is a government,” muttered Guimó, “ whipped on by the white man’s own devil.”

CHAPTER XVI

THE IRON DOOR CLANGS SHUT



GUIMÓ stood waiting on the deserted embankment along the dull Pasig, his cigarette shining at each slow breath. The widely-separated street lamps only intensified the brooding blackness around them and made a maze of all the little lights twinkling from the flocking *cascos** and *lorchas*† and launches and inter-island steamers. Guimó with lowered brows studied the high-riding, low-riding twinkling lights and let himself dream of the mysterious people behind them and of all the life they could tell him of.

He heard the click of oars in rowlocks and saw the *bote* from the *Reina de Hispania* glide toward him over the black water. In a moment's time the half-dozen sailors were beside him and cheerfully leading him along the night streets of Manila. Now they were sauntering along a dingy street bordering the *Estero Sibacong*. Beneath the broad arched roofs of the heavy *cascos* half filling the narrow twisting canal, voices murmured in conversation or wailed out a tragic song. Through

*Canal boats.

†Two-masted sailing vessels.

the cracks in the thatch, Guimó saw the smoky flames of *quinques* glimmering, and thrilled at the mystery of the great night-haunted city.

“Here we go up,” said a sailor, “for here you will always find some of our friends gathered.”

“Where do you sleep to-night?” asked another. “Come with us and we shall take you to a very pleasant place — after we have seen our friends here.”

At the top of the stairway, the sailors and Guimó entered a poorly-lighted room, blue with smoke. Not more than eight men sat around the time-blackened tables, visiting noisily as they smoked and drank their red wine or their strong gin. Soiled playing cards with their queer spots lay around but no one felt like touching them.

Over a glass of bitter wine, Guimó grew to know his new companions. More vividly than ever, he caught a glimpse of the subterranean river of fire. Without restraint, in their own vehement dramatic language, these brown men, one by one, narrated experiences which had been burned often in flesh as well as in mind. Wrongs and tyrannies, they called these many hapless examples of the white man’s misunderstanding. Little by little, the passionate protests, the cries of regret stirred up to a quivering frenzy the group moving restlessly in the haze of smoke. Guimó was the last to tell his story.

“Foolish boy that you are with your hopes,” growled a broad-shouldered Filipino, filling his

copita with gin. "Do you dream that the man in the Palace of Malacañan would understand?"

"No!"

"Fools that we are in our own beautiful islands!"

"If we told her aright, would not Spain understand?" asked Guimó passionately. "Her ears can not be altogether deaf."

"May the judgment of God descend upon the bloody hands of her empire!" shouted a hollow-cheeked native, holding up a crippled hand. "I have told you how that hand was tortured. Then they let me go — with this hand — for they found that the rebellion was only in their own guilty, trembling heads."

"That is her blindness!"

"And heartlessness, brother."

"And so it will be forever!" wailed the oldest man there, in a throaty voice.

For a minute, the group in the blue smoke fell silent.

"Come, *hombres*," urged one of the sailors from the *Reina de Hispania*. "It's all very sweet, this thrill of excitement and this little drama of ours, but I know something sweeter. Come on, Guimó."

Before Guimó got his cigarette lighted, the battered old door crashed open and a platoon of soldiery poured into the dull smoky *sala* and with their gleaming rifles covered the little company gathered there. Two by two the sailors and their

friends were manacled together, Guimó and the oldest man being the last two in the silent little procession.

“ You know what you are arrested for,” spoke an officer. “ You forget that Spain’s ears are not deaf, that her listeners are faithful. Who could not hear, if he had chosen to listen, your traitorous speeches to-night? Oh, for many nights we have been watching this house by the *Estero Sibacong*, careless insurrectos.”

“ If you have heard,” the old man chained to Guimó spoke in his croaking voice, “ what we said to-night, sir, you have heard but the truth and the crying out of a patient race. *Ay*, but you would forbid our hearts to ache for the loss of our children! ”

“ Keep still,” ordered the officer. Then he detailed a sergeant and two privates to make a search of the premises, and gave the order to proceed.

By the side of the old man Guimó trudged through great lengths of strange shadowy streets, past houses where people were dancing, past houses where mourners chanted weirdly their sad *responsos*, past the crumbling façades of ancient churches which held their dim crosses aloft in the night air. The street lamps glistened on the bright rifle barrels of the tramping soldiers. Now and then a chain rattled and far off sounded the ringing of church bells. Thrice a big bell boomed; thrice a small bell clanged; again and

again; Guimó wondered dreamily who was dying.

“ If I do not come to-morrow, Angela will think that I have followed my father, the *mantio*, across the seas without her. . . . Oh, beautiful star, beautiful star! ”

Then Guimó heard a sentry's challenge and the response and saw looming before him the ponderous immovable walls — dark, forbidding, topped by shadowy cannons — of Fort Santiago. The old gate screamed as it swung open on rusty hinges.

Guimó and his companions were driven down a flight of slippery stone steps, a sooty lantern lighting up the damp walls. The prisoners were being huddled into one of the dungeons; Guimó and the old man, the last ones in the dreary procession, moved forward to join them. But the officer lifted his sword and stopped them.

“ That's crowded enough now,” he muttered and marched them down a crooked stone-flagged passageway to a cell that seemed to stretch unendingly out into the dark. The manacles were taken from their wrists. The iron door of the cell clanged shut. Spain, the conscience-stricken, was safe.

“ The floor is wet,” Guimó said stupidly. A wandering echo reverberated through the chilly blackness. Guimó began groping along the moist walls.

“ There is no bench,” murmured the old man at

last when he and Guimó met after their groping around the irregular slime-covered walls. "This floor will have to be our bed."

By and by, Guimó sat on the slime-dampened flagging and tried to sleep by letting his head rest on his knees. Beside him sat the old man, also listening to his own heart-beats in that blind, strangling silence. Then Guimó fancied he heard the plashing and sucking of water. . . . Sleep came to the tired friendly eyes. . . .

He woke up shivering and knew why the floors and walls were slime-covered. Already, the water stood ankle-deep over the dungeon floor. Arising to his feet, he found the old man standing erect, patient.

"I let you sleep, boy," the throaty voice echoed lonesomely, "for of what use is awakening when we can be happy asleep?"

"*Abao*, I am cold."

"Yes, I hear your teeth chattering. But we've got to endure it, boy. Twice each day the tide creeps up; so we must learn to sleep when the tide has ebbed."

For tedious deadening hours, Guimó and the old man talked and filled the dungeon with echoes while the tide crept up past their knees and down again to the reeking floor.

Then Guimó saw a vague gray rectangle outline itself high up on one wall. Slowly this little rectangle brightened until it seemed as if the bright sun must shine upon it. With expectant

eyes, Guimó watched the tiny aperture and thought of the pretty *quiapo* floating helplessly down to the sea. Guimó thrust his strong hands up into the vague bar of light which the friendly sun smuggled in. Out on the Pasig sounded the long sonorous blast of a steamer. From all the great city's campaniles came the faint ringing of bells. Angela would be awake now and waiting for him.

“ We'll get out to-day, won't we, Mauro? ” Guimó asked the old man. “ They will find nothing by the *Estero Sibacong*. They will learn that we did nothing.”

“ They will find nothing, Guimó.”

“ Besides, we are not rich. They can not take any great *haciendas* away from us. Oh, don't you think that they will be fair this time, Mauro? There are white men who are good.”

“ But they can not speak.”

“ The soldiers will let us out to-day, won't they? ”

“ To-day! Oh, God, to-day! ” cried the old man in his throaty voice. “ Must I tell you of the deathlike slowness of Spain? *Abao*, poor Guimó, if you are out six months from to-day, you will, indeed, have proved that you are a *mantio's* son.”

“ But we have done nothing,” Guimó declared fervently, striving to cherish his hope.

“ That makes no difference, boy. When you get out — ”

“ When we get out — all of us — you and I — ”

“ I, Guimó? I shall never see the city again. I am an old man and twice daily the tides gurgles in through the cracks of these thick old walls and crawl up on my stiffening legs.”

“ We must get out to-day, to-morrow, very soon,” cried Guimó with all his soul.

“ Foolish boy! Foolish boy! Don’t let yourself believe it. Don’t believe it and you will save yourself unending disappointments.”

“ No — no! Keep still. I can’t believe you! ” Guimó’s voice was shrill with horror.

“ These stone walls will compel you,” thundered the old man in the voice of a prophet.

“ No — No — No! Never say that again. Never say that or I’ll — ” As from a far-removed place, Guimó listened to the hollow echoes of his own frantic words.

“ Oh, my beautiful world — my beautiful world! ”

The iron door swung open. A warder with a pot of rice and a water-jar entered and set down his load while a soldier waited in the door.

“ When do we — ” Guimó dared not ask the question so he said: “ When do we get a chance to speak? ”

“ God only knows,” replied the soldier.

“ Not to-day? ”

“ To-day,” laughed the soldier in great astonishment. “ To-day! Do you not know that this is the land of the everlasting to-morrow? ”

The iron door clanged shut.

Angela would be waiting, always waiting. Oh, what would become of his beautiful star? Who would help her get into the Palace of Malacañan? Where could she go — where would she go if Juan Concha died in the iron collar? Poor homeless Angela!

The old man wondered as he listened to Guimó's hopeless sobs which mingled with the faint ringing of all the bells of Manila's churches.

CHAPTER XVII

WHILE THE *QUIAPO* DRIFTS TO THE SEA



GUIMÓ sat shivering at one end of a bare bamboo couch and staring absently at the bar of gray light reaching out toward him from the little rectangular aperture high up in the dungeon wall. By his side, on the bamboo couch, the old man's limbs were fast growing rigid. Through the cracks in the masonry the tide came gurgling in as it had gurgled in twice every day for four months — four months which had crept along at the leprosy's pace.

Guimó, with the sunken eyes, the long-grown hair, the drooping lips, shivered from the cold. Sometimes he panted with fever. Sometimes he coughed and listened patiently to the echo. Every day he had told the old man what luck had been theirs in getting the bamboo couch which the rising tide could not cover. For a consideration of two gold nuggets taken from the worn handkerchief, the warder had grudgingly smuggled it in to them; the soldier who always came with the warder had been kind and had refused to demand Guimó's last nuggets from him. . . . The

bamboo couch had kept the old man alive for many weeks. Guimó, once so strongly lithe and beautiful-bodied, had ceased to ask himself how long — for him — the couch would ward the conquering dampness off. . . . Nothing to think of, nothing to feel was there for a man asleep.

When the warder came with the pot of rice and the jar of water, Guimó dully told him that the old man had died in the night. The soldier at the door cursed softly and loathingly lent the warder a hand in carrying out the cold, rigid body.

As soon as the door clanged shut, Guimó dragged the bamboo couch over to the wall beneath the little window-like aperture. He turned it up on edge and drew himself up till he stood on the highest part. There, by standing on tip-toe, he could look out through the tiny rectangle and watch the busy river-life and the floating, drifting *quiapo*.

In the days before the old man grew feeble, Guimó had often stood in that fashion till the muscles of his feet and ankles ached. Often he had watched the black inter-island steamers throb in and out, the passengers smoking luxuriously on deck. Often he had watched the tenders puff in laden with travelers from the ocean-going boats bound from China or from Spain. Just as often he had watched the tenders puff out again laden with those departing to distant cities and to homes beyond the sea. Those out-going tenders as they slid across the narrow picture framed by the deep

stone casings, Guimó had studied, ever in the fear and the hope that he might see Angela setting out for Singapore or for Hongkong in search of her banished uncle. But always the puffing little boats had slipped by so swiftly and at such a distance that Guimó's straining eyes were left eternally in doubt.

Guimó now stood, after a fortnight's mournful interim, again watching with straining eyes the passing of boats. Warm and pleasant, the flashing ripples caught the morning sun; as blue as an oriental gem, a bit of blue sky glowed serenely above a drop of Manila. Guimó's dull, starving eyes devoured this small fragment of his beautiful world. He thought of the day when he stood on the crest of the *cordillera* and heard the mingled voices of plains and sea and distant islands calling to him.

Through his ankles the old pain was shooting; the tiny picture in the stone frame writhed, then danced away. *Aba*, he would not climb down to rest shivering in the reeking shadows. The tiny picture grew black as though a terrible storm had swept down on the city. The city sank. . . . Guimó sank down resistingly to the flagging that spun, to the water-covered floor of the weltering whirling dungeon. As to a rock, he clung to the bamboo posts of his couch. . . . The mad world grew sane. The flagging, wearied of spinning, paused to rest. . . .

The iron door swung open.

"Come out," called the warder. Guimó stumbled to the door and ran blindly into the soldier.

"Poor devil," growled the soldier.

The warder, candle in hand, led Guimó along the crooked passageway and up the slippery stone steps. . . . Once more Guimó was out under the friendly glowing sky. From there, the warder and the soldier led him into a small spider-webbed room where a high officer sat behind a desk buried in dust. Guimó stared without sense at the weighty gold braid of this high officer whom the soldier called "*comandante*," at the close-trimmed purple-black beard, the piercing eyes and the close-cropped purple-black hair.

"Well, tell me all about it," ordered the *comandante*. His voice sounded repellent, sibilant.

"About the way the old man died, sir?" asked Guimó dully.

"No. Did you ever? I believe you Filipinos would be insolent with your dying breath. You know what I want."

"About the way the government confiscated my master's *hacienda* — *Hacienda Paz*?"

"No, you fool," came the officer's suave reply as he picked up a strap from the dusty top of the desk and lashed Guimó across the chest.

"*Abao*, sir, of Angela I can not tell you," said Guimó apathetically.

"You dirty brown insurrecto," snarled the officer angrily, "tell me about that night — that

night and the nights before when you planned to massacre us all. You've had time enough to remember."

"There never could be time enough, sir."

"What do you mean?" The gold-braided officer leaned forward.

"I mean that there was nothing—to remember."

"You pretend to say that. You pretend to say that your rebellious gathering was not a part of a big movement for mischief?"

"We were but a gathering of mourners, sir, for our happiness was dead. *Abao*, you must know that."

The *comandante* laughed sneeringly and the sound of it awakened Guimó.

"What shall I say?" Guimó asked patiently. "I must please you with my answers. . . . Is it so pleasant for you to let us suffer and to let the old man die? It must be so." Guimó's sunken eyes were flashing as the old spirit surged up within him. "Let me tell you then that since that night the old man and I had a thousand plans to drive your pestilent bodies from our beautiful happy world, to let you feel—as we have felt—the serpent's cold scales squirm across your throats. Yes, we had a thousand plans after that thunder-blasted night!"

The piercing eyes of the high officer cut into Guimó until his flesh shrank.

"You know, of course," said the *comandante*,

writing a name in the dust on the desk-top, "that the penalty for plotting against the government is death."

"Yes," answered Guimó listlessly. "The white man must never be disappointed."

"The thumbscrews, Juan."

"Excuse me, sir —"

"You heard what I said."

"But this poor devil —"

"Oh, maybe you will take his place."

"I will," answered the soldier quietly.

To Guimó it seemed as if the little cob-webbed room was bursting with sunshine. He heard the high officer say: "Warder, you are a witness to that."

"I have seen another good white man and he is but a common soldier," ran again and again through Guimó's consciousness.

"Juan, you may go. I want to talk to this boy a minute." The soldier went out reluctantly and closed the door behind him. "This is your last chance to tell the truth about the big plot."

"I have, sir."

"Don't be obstinate."

"God knows what I said was true."

"Warder, we'll have to do what we've been compelled to do so often."

Guimó endured the grinding agony of the thumbscrews, biting his lips till the blood came and shaking his head each time the gold-braided officer questioned him. Then he moaned and the

word that he moaned was a name — the name of the truest friend he knew in his beautiful faithless world — *Angela!* He fought for the strength that was deserting him but the fight was a losing one. He shrieked and his head dropped on his breast. . . .

When consciousness returned, his mouth was burning with the taste of brandy and his hands were free. He wondered mistily if he would always keep waking up that way.

Then he noticed that officers and men filled the little cob-webbed room. They were talking in great excitement and examining something that lay in a heap not far from him on the dusty floor. Then Guimó remembered. It was the gold-braided officer with the purple-black beard.

“What — ” Guimó asked thickly.

The young soldier who knelt beside him with the flask of brandy still in his hand looked at him kindly and said: “Juan killed him. Don’t worry. You’re all right. *Car-r-r-ramba*, but the old warder is upset! Just look at him. He says Juan was listening outside the door. When you shrieked, Juan rushed in. He seemed beside himself about you. The *comandante* drew his sword and slashed wildly at your friend. Juan dodged, then used the butt of his rifle. You see the result. He strapped up the old warder and got away.”

“He got away,” Guimó repeated.

“Yes, and I’m not sorry. Nobody is. He’ll

get over to Cavite and be safe enough among the insurrectos. They're growing mighty strong."

The good-natured soldier arose and drew aside a youngish officer also wearing much heavy gold braid. He, in turn, called the warder with whom he talked earnestly. Guimó could not distinguish their words, the room was so filled with incoherent speculations and arguments.

The youngish officer — after a minute — stepped over to Guimó who sat propped up in one cob-webbed corner and said: "All right, boy. No need of keeping you here so long. You are free. Melecio will take you to the gate."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LONG SEARCH



HEN began Guimó's long search for Angela. For a single gold nugget, a poor shop-keeper sheared Guimó's long hair and sold him some cheap clothes and — when he heard the boy's story — invited him to live in his little home up over the shop. The shop-keeper's wife immediately began doctoring Guimó. To be sure, she had a large family of her own and the house was one of Manila's smallest, but that mattered not. She took him in and mothered him and asked him numberless questions about the *nanai* he had lost. It must have been the taste of the old mother love rather than the bitter brews that soothed Guimó's restlessness and built up the boyish strength day by day.

There came a time when he ventured down the narrow hivelike street. He came back to the little shop bearing a greater loneliness than when he left it. The next day he wandered off the hive-like street onto a wider, quieter thoroughfare but Angela's face was dismally hidden. Thus, day by

day, he penetrated a little more deeply into the weblike heart of the great Philippine metropolis, his anxious, watchful eyes ever roving for the one who needed him, his beloved friend, Angela. Always, however, her gentle face remained hidden and the evenings of disappointment rolled up their numbers.

“ Maybe I am too late,” he would whisper each night as he fell asleep.

Many a time he spied her — so he hoped — in a distant approaching *calesa** but each time the hurrying vehicle rattled past him with its girlish stranger and its disappointment. “ She is, perhaps, off in Hongkong or Singapore,” he always muttered, hoping that she was happy.

Angela and her mother had departed from the cheap hotel so long before that the proprietress and her servants had completely forgotten their sojourn. The proprietress scolded the boy who pleaded so hard with her and rattled the great bunch of shining keys dangling on her hip. “ Devil take it,” she cried vexedly, “ how would I know whither they traveled? ”

Guimó loitered outside the gates of the Palace of Malacañan and begged servants coming out on errands to tell him whether a woman and a young girl, a beautiful girl, had visited the governor-general in the palace there.

“ I don’t know,” they invariably answered. “ Perhaps so; perhaps not.”

*A low, two-wheeled carriage.

Then Guimó went to the *Ayuntamiento*, the capitol of the archipelago. The sentries stopped him at the foot of the marble staircase.

“Where is your letter of recommendation?”

“I have none,” he sighed.

“Then you have no business here.”

Guimó took to spending hours in the small plaza hard by the *Ayuntamiento*. He gained the friendship of one of the Tagalog boys employed in the capitol. Little by little, as he humbly smoked the Tagalog's cigarettes, he learned where each influential member of the executive staff resided. Many times he saw the governor-general's carriage arrive and depart but each time he snuffed out the up-surging temptation.

“*Abao*, I can see that he, too, has forgotten.”

Guimó followed up his last plan. He presented himself at the white, tile-roofed houses of the members of the executive staff and begged to be taken as a servant. He would serve so faithfully that when he prayed his master to find out for him the fate of Juan Concha, his master would show mercy; and thus he would perhaps secure a frail thread which would lead him like a kite string to the cloud concealing his beautiful star and he would know if she was happy. But each of the white, tile-roofed houses sent Guimó away disheartened.

The next morning, Guimó again sat waiting patiently in the small plaza near the *Ayuntamiento*. Above his head the leaves of the rain trees

rustled. By and by the Tagalog boy appeared. He held out his paper bag of cigarettes.

"*Salamat-po,*"* murmured Guimó, abstractedly taking out a cigarette.

"Where were you yesterday?" asked the Tagalog boy.

"I went to the houses you told me of but they all sent me marching."

"Too bad, Guimó. Maybe I can hear of a job for you. I'll try.

"But I am very particular, friend."

"You can not receive much money anywhere."

"I am not anxious about the money. I want to work somewhere — somewhere —"

"Where, Guimó?"

"Where my master will be sure to find out a certain thing for me — a certain thing which only the high officials can tell me. Thunder blast it, I can not get to them and anyway they will not listen to me. I would have been such a good servant that my master — if I could have found him — would have told me truly."

"It is very hard to find things out, Guimó. I have watched many poor souls try it foolishly."

"I must find out, friend. My happiness depends on it wholly."

"What is it you want to find out, Guimó?"

"About Juan Concha, the father of Angela. I want to know if he was garroted down on the island of Buglas."

*Thank you, sir.

“ Very hard. . . . Very hard.”

“ How can I find out, friend? ”

“ Ah, I have thought. I know of one who has great influence and who has, they say, a kind heart.”

“ Tell me.”

“ But, Guimó, she is a bad woman. She has no soul, they say. She is a courtesan. Her name is Elisea Flores. She dwells in a very pretty house on *Calle Potenciana*. *Abao*, I have seen her. She is the most beautiful woman in Manila.”

“ Could she find out for me? ”

“ Could she? She can find out anything, Guimó. She has great power because she is so beautiful. *Abao*, but she is beautiful. And she is the darling of one who is very high in Manila.”

“ Maybe she would hire me, friend.”

“ I think she would. She likes pretty servants. She has much money.”

“ I shall try — I can not leave Manila without finding out about poor Angela.”

“ Good luck, Guimó. . . . Have another cigarette. My master does not miss them.”

“ *Salamat-po.* ”

Guimó betook himself to the pretty house on *Calle Potenciana*. Down below, the fresh lime on the stone walls gleamed dazzlingly. The bellying iron grills over the broad windows on each side of the deep-set entranceway shone in their hibiscus-red paint. The projecting upper story with its many tiny-paned window panels seemed

to Guimó's eyes to have a heart—if not a soul.

Guimó entered and went thoughtfully up the stairs. A servant brought him into the presence of the courtesan. Truly she was beautiful. She sat there inertly in a stately basket-like chair, dreamily outlined against the wide-spreading circular screenlike back.

“What is it, boy?”

“Have mercy, Señorita, and let me be your servant.”

“I have many servants now.”

“*Abao*, Señorita, but you have not me.”

Elisea, the courtesan, smiled, her face lighting up like the sky when a tiny star shoots through it.

All the old youthful virility had reentered Guimó's strong lithe figure during the months the shopkeeper's wife had mothered him and he had walked much in the limpid air and the humming sunlight during the months he had vigilantly watched for one who would be wholly lost without him. Again his eyes were shining, friendly, but something of the old audacity had stayed behind in the ancient dungeon of Fort Santiago. As when he smiled at the world from the crest of the *cordillera*, his clean-cut lips were full and wistful, but in the angles there appeared a deepening. Still all the old impelling loveliness glimmered around him as he stood in the presence of Elisea.

“ What is your name, boy? ” A fragile burden of drowsiness weighted her red lips continuously.

“ Guimó.”

“ I would be foolish to hire another servant.”

“ Have mercy, Señorita,” pleaded Guimó.

“ There are many happier places to work, Guimó.”

“ But, Señorita, you — ”

“ You think I am beautiful.”

“ Ah, you are. . . . And maybe you would have mercy on me and help me. I need you so much.”

“ What queer words you always speak. You, a poor boy, needing me! ”

“ Yes, Señorita. And I will work very hard for you.”

“ Where is your home, Guimó? ”

“ I am seeking it, Señorita. It used to be in the great forest on the side of the volcano.”

“ Poor Guimó, then you are a wanderer, too.”

“ Oh, yes. There seems to be no place where I can rest.”

“ Thus it is with all of us,” said Elisea gently.

“ But you can help me.”

“ I will. Some day, perhaps, you can help your friend Elisea. You look as though you could. You seem so different from the other Filipinos. Oh, maybe I need you, too, Guimó. I do need a friend. It's terrible to live in a world

where all true friends are dead. . . . My own people, the white men and women, are lost to me. And your people, the brown people, Guimó, are only my dull servants or strangers in this land of strangeness. . . . But you — you are strong. You are comely and there's something behind your eyes that tells me — that tells me you could be a friend with understanding in your heart. You would have pity and maybe the day might come when you could help me."

"Señorita, I am glad to be your friend and I am glad that you are mine. I have not many."

"Poor boy, what is it that I can do for you — to help you?" That fragile burden of drowsiness still weighted her red lips.

"Listen, Señorita." Guimó glanced around to see if the strangely-scented room was empty. Then simply, unaffectedly, he told his whole story. Elisea leaned forward in her great-backed chair, her eyes queerly dreamy.

"Señorita, you will have mercy, now that I have told you my story?"

"Oh, I would not betray you, Guimó. No. . . . No! You have had a wonderful life, haven't you? You have tasted the earth's bitter wine but, boy, for you there is yet the sweet wine. May you receive it soon. That is my wish. May you receive it soon, Guimó. May it not be like mine which always grows bitterer. You will help me, won't you? You will not condemn me because I have lost my soul. . . . If I

could have but one friend, just one friend with a clean heart! ”

“ You can, Señorita.” Guimó spoke compassionately. “ I will be your friend. I don’t care if you have no soul. I don’t believe I have one at all.”

“ You have, Guimó; you have. I can tell it by your eyes.”

“ It is a great wonder I have not lost it — if it is so easily lost. I haven’t taken good care of it in the fashion I cared for my locket and my *mutia*.”

“ I am afraid you don’t understand.”

“ I wouldn’t know the difference if my soul was lost.”

“ Yes, you would. You would and your heart would be heavy. I am but a courtesan, as the whole city knows, yet I have a heart which is full of hoping that you will never know what it is to lose your soul.”

“ Señorita — ”

“ Oh, let me not talk this way. It is wiser to try to forget. . . . Guimó, I shall find out for you about Juan Concha and perhaps, perhaps, I can tell you something of Angela. Ah, but we can not expect too much, can we? We live among men.”

After tramping a wearisome distance along hot streets, Guimó arrived at the home of the poor shop-keeper. The shop-keeper’s wife bade him an affectionate good-bye; her husband wished him

luck and the protection of the good God. Then Guimó sorrowfully returned to *Calle Potenciana* and became the servant of Elisea.

He carried water; he poured wine; he went out on the streets and bought tightly squeezed nose-gays which Elisea rearranged for her table. His chief duty, however, was that of a gliding chamberlain. He put an ample folded cloth under each foot and glided softly back and forth, back and forth, and in and out, and thus kept the rich *molave* floors unceasingly mirrorlike for Elisea.

One afternoon, when his mistress's shining cabriolet had driven up in front of the dark entranceway, she bade him mount the box and drive her ponies.

"I am afraid, Guimó," she explained quietly. "And I can trust you."

Many afternoons, he drove the cabriolet through the twisting streets of Manila, through the Santa Lucia gate, across the moat, along the Bagumbayan to the pleasant plaza facing the sunset sea. Here to the Luneta rolled the harlequin wealth and fashion of the great Tagalog-Chinese-Spanish city.

Though the pony teams of some ladies pranced in silver-plated harness, not one of these ladies looked as beautiful as his mistress in her strange Parisian attire, in her far-strayed bewitching frills. Even her deep-fringed white silk parasol seemed an exile from the boulevards of Europe. But her eyes were unweariedly looking far away

— away beyond the coruscating horizon. Guimó was glad that she had found one friend.

Guimó allowed his ponies to walk as the shining cabriolet one day entered the old walled city again on the way back to *Calle Potenciana*. As he drew near to the ancient San Augustin church with its weather-stained, time-worn façade and campanile and close-snuggling *convento* — breathing of the mysteries of centuries past — he fixed his eyes for the hundredth time on the ponderous, deep-carved portals where one massive panel swung open. After ninety and nine disappointments, he still fondly hoped to see Angela with her good pious heart come forth.

But no one passed out through those portals far back from the street. The deep stone-ramparted yard was deserted. Then a man stepped out from the shadow of a massive gatepost — a man with a scar stretching from jaw to cheek bone. The man paused motionless, his scarred face almost touching the hideously grotesque dog of stone surmounting the gatepost.

The ponies walked sedately along, the reins lying forgotten in Guimó's hands. Guimó looked back over his shoulder. The Tagalog whom he had long ago so nearly killed was following unhurriedly, smoking a black home-made cigar.

A few minutes more and Guimó looked back again. Now the man with the scarred face had a *cuadrillero* in tow; the two were half running. Guimó sensibly let the ponies keep up their

sedate walking. He sat very still, frowning dully.

"Halt," commanded the *cuadrillero* quietly, running out beside the cabriolet. "We want you for the murder of Corporal Montilla." He spoke quietly and Guimó brought the ponies to a stop.

"*Abao*, at last!" The man with the terrible scar had come up to the cabriolet. "I have found Juana. She saw you. She will be a witness for me." He spoke rapidly, exultingly, and let his fingers stroke the disfigured cheek.

"You are crazy," said Guimó sternly.

"Not so crazy as you who thought that a Tagalog would rest."

"What is your name, *Cuadrillero*?" Elisea asked ingratiatingly.

"Alfonso Macanan, Señorita."

"And yours?" she asked the man with the scarred face. "I know one who stands by the governor-general's ear and I want him to know about you two faithful fellows."

Guimó's shining eyes grew dull again and despairing.

The man with the scarred face hesitated and then said: "Cipriano Deroma, Señorita."

"What is your business, Cipriano?" she asked, the drowsy weight still on her lips.

"I am a soldier in the *Guardia Civil* of Buglas. I am a Tagalog, though. My home is here on *Calle Carriedo*."

"Well, Alfonso and Cipriano," the eyes of

Elisea darkened, "I shall give your names to the one who stands by the governor-general's ear. And if ever you breathe one word about my servant here, if ever another absurd attempt is made to arrest him, if ever you attempt to touch him, you will both be banished to the worst and farthest place I can send you — the penal colony in Africa. Well do you know that my accusation is more than enough, whatever I choose to say. Do you understand? "

"Yes, Señorita," they replied, shrinking.

"All right, Guimó. Drive home."

When Guimó drew up the cabriolet in front of the pretty house on *Calle Potenciana*, Elisea stepped out and said whimsically: "There is also a bright side to this rotten Spanish tyranny, Guimó."

"You show me glorious kindness, Señorita," he murmured prayerfully.

"For you love me with your soul when I am soulless and afraid," smiled Elisea slowly.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MIGHTY COMET AND THE LITTLE STAR



HE oily smell of the smoking *quinque* filled the low back room on the ground floor where Elisea's servants slept. Someone came in out of the darkness and awakened Guimó. He jumped up startled and saw his fellow-servant Mauricio standing beside the bamboo bed.

“The Señorita Elisea wishes to see you at once,” whispered Mauricio. “Hasten.”

Guimó ascended the stairs, tiptoed through the *sala*, and entered the rambling low-ceilinged boudoir of his mistress. A queer soporific odor to which he had long before grown accustomed hung heavy on the air. A solitary candle fluttered beside the bowl of flowers. Near it lay a long thick pipe as black as the shadows.

Elisea half reclined, half sat on the chintz-covered divan. Guimó gazed wonderingly into her feverishly glittering eyes.

“Guimó,” she said, “I have found out.”

“At last!” Guimó felt the beating of his heart.

“Poor Guimó!”

“Señorita!”

“Juan Concha is dead. . . . The garrote.”

“*Abao*, Señorita, what a curse is mine! . . . I was afraid — I was afraid that he was dead and yet — you know how it is — there is ever the little hope with its powerful strength.”

“Poor Guimó.”

“What — what do you suppose has become of Angela? Do you think she has gone to Hongkong or to Singapore?”

“I can not tell, Guimó. But this I promise: If she is in Manila, I shall find her for you. If anyone can, I can.”

“*Abao*, if I could but see her again. I am afraid she is not happy.”

“Very few are happy, Guimó. Do not expect it. . . . But you shall see her again.”

Guimó looked into Elisea’s glittering eyes.

“I shall see my beautiful star again.”

“Yes, Guimó.”

“You are wonderful.”

“No, boy, beautiful and without a soul. . . . Bring me the little can in the top drawer of my sandal-wood bureau. . . . Thank you. I shall smoke once more before I go to sleep. This opium gives me back my soul again.”

Elisea held a small measure of the opium over the dancing flame. Again Guimó thought how beautiful she was, her luxuriant black hair coiled loosely on the pallid neck, her dark eyes glittering

strangely, her brilliantly red lips smiling wistfully.

Guimó backed courteously out of the boudoir, his eyes fixed on Elisea's flushed face so close to the candle flame.

"Guimó," she called, as she pressed the opium into the bowl of the black pipe, "Guimó, you will always be my friend. You will not go away and leave me. Oh, I am afraid!"

"I'll stand by you, Señorita."

"All right. . . . Go down to your bed and dream."

Guimó departed but his dreams were haunted.

"Abao, Señorita," he said anxiously one early afternoon two days later, "see who is strolling back and forth on the other side of our street."

"Oh, I am tired, Guimó," replied Elisea in her drowsy voice. "Tell me who it is."

"Cipriano, the man with the scarred face."

"He! How dares he come near you?" Then she summoned Mauricio, Guimó's fellow-servant.

"Mauricio," she commanded, "do you see that man with the terribly scarred face walking on the other side of the street?"

Mauricio pattered to the open window.

"Si, Señorita."

"Well, you go to him and tell him I do not wish to see him on *Calle Potenciana* again. Tell him to collect his thoughts and be wise. He will understand."

"Someone always hunting for me," said Guimó

quietly when he heard Mauricio thudding down the stairs.

“That’s the way it goes, Guimó. I know how it is.”

“I wonder why I am hunted.”

“Because you are different — because you fought for your world. No one ever understands anything, as you and I know. . . . Besides, it is very pleasant, they say, to hunt.”

“It must be — it must.”

“Guimó, do you know what we must do? We, too, must hunt. Thus we can keep even.”

“I can’t see the happiness in it.”

“Try it, Guimó. Try it. It is a supreme satisfaction to hunt down those who have hurt us. . . . Some day, perhaps, I shall try it too.”

When Mauricio returned, he said: “Señorita, that fellow says you can no longer command him. He says that he is not afraid of you longer.”

“Ah! . . . Well, Mauricio, you may go to your work.”

“What does he mean — that scarred fellow — by disobeying you?”

“I know what he means. Oh, Guimó, you know now why I am afraid. He has been whispering lies and the truth into the ears of my lover. And my lover is one who always makes me afraid.”

Elisea arose from the chair with the broad screenlike back and disappeared into her boudoir. When she returned, she carried a revolver in her hand.

“Guimó, you must carry this every minute and watch; keep watching. Oh, you shall not go out on the street again. Now go to the window, Guimó, and wait there. The man with the scar will soon catch the gleam of your weapon. Let him know.”

The next night, while Leona, a serving-maid, was laying the table for Elisea's dinner, a frightened scream rang through the house. Elisea came running out of her boudoir. Guimó came flying in from the smoky kitchen. They both found Leona leaning back tremblingly against the white damask of the dining-table.

“*Car-r-r-ramba*, have you seen a ghost?” asked Guimó.

“No, no. Back behind that wide door I found a man crouching. I could see the light thrown back from his kris. He had such a terrible scar on his face. But he fled — he fled like a bat down the stairs and out.”

“God pity us,” moaned Elisea.

“Our vigil must be sharper,” declared Guimó decisively.

He followed his frightened mistress back to the door of her boudoir.

“Señorita, he will get me.”

“It is time for us to get even.”

“Can we, when he has made up his mind that he will not be again disappointed? He cannot wait for the law.”

“Guimó, you must keep awake to-night the

whole night through. I will let you sleep tomorrow. And as you watch, let that revolver not be in your pocket."

"I shall watch, Señorita."

"Watch for my sake, too, Guimó. . . . I am afraid — afraid that he has been sent after me."

"Why, Señorita? "

"Oh, I cannot tell you! "

Late the following afternoon — just as the dusk was deepening on Manila's streets — Mauricio came to Guimó's bamboo bed in the low back room where the servants slept, and awakened the restless sleeper.

"Guimó, the Señorita Elisea again commands you to come upstairs at once."

Guimó found his beautiful mistress seated languidly in the great chair which she liked so well.

"I have found her at last, Guimó."

"My beautiful star? "

"Yes."

"Where — where is she, Señorita? "

"Angela," called Elisea drowsily.

The boudoir door slowly opened and Angela stepped timidly into the dusk-veiled *sala*. Guimó stared incredulously. He could not believe that the girl by the dark door was the one who loved him. She no longer wore the sweeping great-figured train and the diaphanous bell-sleeved *camisa* of her own people. She was clad in a European costume of white silk; she walked in

shining, high-heeled slippers; her hair twinkled with brilliants set in combs; her lips outlined themselves in carmine.

“My beautiful star,” cried Guimó, striding toward her.

“*Aba*, Guimó!” Angela greeted him in a low voice filled with pain.

“Oh, I have found you—I have found you at last. God is merciful.”

“I would not have come, Guimó, had I known you were here.”

“Angela—Angela, I was in prison—in Fort Santiago. . . . Did you think I had crossed the seas like a *mantio*’s son—without you?”

“No, Guimó. I knew that God was sleeping. I knew that the great comet had caught you up, too, as it swept over us.”

“But now I have found you. Now I can take care of you.”

“Can you, Guimó? Maybe in the dusk you cannot see the carmine on my lips. That comes from the comet.”

“What do I care for carmine? You are only my more radiant, my more beautiful star.”

“Guimó, Guimó, oh, I am sorry I ever came here,” cried Angela pathetically.

“Don’t say that.”

“Oh, I am.”

“You have not forgotten what a friend you are to me,” Guimó pleaded.

“No, no. But I must try to forget.”

“ Why, Angela? . . . What has happened? . . . Why do you always speak as you do, Angela? ”

“ *Abao, abao,*” wailed Angela. “ I am only a little star and the comet is mighty.”

“ What can you mean? ”

It was almost dark in the courtesan’s *sala* now. The vesper bells rang thrillingly from many campaniles. No one spoke the answer to Guimó’s question.

Finally, Elisea said pityingly: “ Angela is my sister.”

Guimó’s lips remained shut.

“ Oh, Guimó,” entreated Angela, “ it is true. One day our bag of silver coins became empty. My mother said we must live. She said that I must help her, that I had brought the curse upon her because I had been your friend. She said that there was but one sacrifice for me to make of my useless body—one way that I could save her from begging and dying—one way that I could save my spirit from being stained eternally with her blood. And, Guimó, I took that way for I was helpless and she was my mother.”

“ Angela! ” Such was Guimó’s poignant lament.

“ But, Guimó,” said Elisea quietly, “ I know you have a heart. You can forgive her. You can take her and make her happy once more. How could she counteract the mighty comet of life? ”

“*Abao*, I know she couldn’t, *Señorita*. How well I have learned its irresistible power! She is also one of us. Oh, Angela, how sorry I am. . . . But I have found you. I will take care of you and make you happy. We can go somewhere in the big world. Maybe we could go to Hongkong.”

“I will let you have the money,” promised Elisea in her eager drowsy voice, “to go to Hongkong.”

“I am glad that you are not angry, Guimó,” murmured Angela patiently. “I am glad that you do not hate me. But, Guimó, the comet has swallowed me up and I will not — will not go with you.”

“Angela,” begged Guimó, “I must make you happy. Please go with me.”

“Yes, Angela,” added Elisea. “Somewhere there is happiness for you. Guimó can find that shore. Somewhere the world is big and beautiful.”

“I cannot. I cannot,” mourned Angela. “Mother prays daily that the shadow of poor Guimó may never fall upon our path again. It is a curse, she says. Oh, if I went with you, dear companion, as my heart tells me to, she would curse me, too, and her blood would be upon my head, and I could not bear that. Poor mother, I must stay with her. Always her thoughts seem farther away than your mountains. No, no, I

cannot go. I cannot go with you. Good-bye, Guimó; good-bye; good-bye."

And Angela in her shining, high-heeled slippers ran out of the black *sala* and down the stairs and out into her *calesa*. Elisea and Guimó heard the swift clatter of hoofs and the rumbling of wheels. . . . Soon they heard those sounds no more.

Mauricio entered softly and lighted the lamps in the chandelier. The yellow light showed Guimó sitting, stooped, frowning, stoical, in one of Elisea's chairs. Elisea crossed the mirror-like floor and laid her hand gently on his sturdy shoulder.

"Guimó," she murmured, "I am your friend."

At this, Guimó buried his drawn face in his hands. Elisea remained bending over him, stroking his shoulders compassionately. A soft creaking and rustling caused her to turn her head in quick alarm. Someone had stirred out in the dim hallway. But she saw no one and concluded that one of her servants must be prowling there.

"Guimó," she said at length, "I am going to send you away from me. I am going to send you on a mission. I am going to send you forth to find happiness. You are young and you can. And your first duty will be to put to confusion those that hate us. Never rest. Press on and destroy. Be watchful. Turn like the snake that is trodden. That is the way we must fight for our lives. Join

the comet and sweep on. Mankind is that comet and mankind must be happy for it is so different from our unhappy selves. Guimó — ”

“ But, Señorita, who will be your friend if I go? ”

“ You — as you go on your mission. . . . And, perhaps, some day I, too, shall join the comet. . . . Come along.”

Guimó followed Elisea into her rambling boudoir. He watched her light the single candle; he watched her unlock her heaviest chest and draw out a handful of money.

“ This is a gift from Elisea,” she said, handing it to him. “ It will carry you far.”

Guimó was thrusting the money into his several pockets, Elisea was very thoughtfully locking the chest, when her frenzied lover burst stealthily in upon them.

“ I have heard enough — enough. Thank God I was informed!” he cried insanely. Before Elisea could rise from her knees, he was choking her wildly. Guimó saw bony fingers pressing into the smooth white neck.

“ Stop,” hissed Guimó, his eyes flaring.

“ When she is dead! ”

The candle light gleamed dancingly on the revolver as Guimó pointed it at Elisea’s lover of high station.

“ Stop! ”

But the mad lover did not stop. A loud detonation set the window panels and the bowl of flowers

shivering. The bony fingers fell from Elisea's white neck.

"Shut the door," gasped Elisea weakly.

Guimó obeyed. He heard the other servants chattering, screaming, running.

"Our revenge has begun," whispered Elisea quietly. "And it has not stopped. . . . Give me that revolver."

She grasped the smoking shining weapon from his hands. "Now, Guimó, go — get out of Manila. You have not done this deed, but I. I have these marks on my throat to defend me against the law. Remember that you and I have joined the comet which always sweeps forward with the sweep of death. We have only begun to strike back. . . . Good-bye, Guimó, and good luck. You will yet win back your happiness. *Adios!*"


So Guimó ran out of the gloomy entranceway and cried out to the people hurrying down the dark, lamp-lighted street toward Elisea's house: "He has killed her; he has killed her!"

By and by, as the confusion grew, he slipped away, homeless once more but on a mission.

"Nothing can stop me now," he muttered vehemently. "Death has run by my side; I will now run beside it. And in your name, O friends that are lost and beautiful world gone to dust!"

CHAPTER XX

THE NIGHT OF THE BROWN MEN

UT of the town of Dao, down in the southern part of the island of Buglas, a long straggling column of brown, barefooted men was tramping. The sky-consuming coppery sunset lighted up stolid faces whence the age-long patience had fled. It may have been the world fire of the sky that tinged the cheeks of the hundreds winding out of Dao; it may have been the avenging fire from within that proclaimed the rampant blood-lust. In the forefront, Guimó jogged along, a pock-marked native on one side of him, his dark burly chieftain on the other. Behind them in Dao they had left a young Spanish friar crucified, nailed to the weather-beaten doors of his own *convento*. It mattered not that the young friar had ever been faithful and gentle-hearted. He was but one of the company of white men doomed to pay for the misunderstandings of the foolish and the blind. Ahead of them, defenseless Majayjay and Padre Fernando and one fugitive or another awaited the fateful visitation.

One of those great whirlwinds that make history had sucked up the flock of Philippine Islands dotting the indigo sea. Though the palms still swayed sleepily along dazzling beaches, the whirlwind, nevertheless, swept on in the brown eyes of the Malayan people.

The power of Spain had fallen. The galling yoke had dropped worm-eaten from brown shoulders. The island people lifted their heads; they raised their arms skyward and let the glowing tropic sunshine beat on them. Gone was the benumbing fear of the white man; gone was the chill breeze of his proud galloping among them. The knowledge of all this tore through their veins like the fumes of bitter gin and drove them on wildly drunken.

Far to the north, in Manila Bay ranged the steel squadron of a new unheard-of race of devils, wonderful shooters who had sunk Spain's fleet of twice as many vessels before mass on a Sunday morning. These devils from the other side of the mighty Pacific had dropped like a thunderbolt upon the archipelago and had delivered it, but they had not departed after their work was done. Still their steel squadron brooded over the queen of cities.

The turmoil in hundreds of islands resounded. Along the coast road leading from Dao to Majajay, the straggling column of brown men pressed onward. The fading magnificence of the western sky still illumined the faces of the trudging

avengers. Woe betided the white man caught in the sweep of that forward-pressing column.

“The friar in Majayjay,” murmured Guimó to the pock-marked, half-blinded native beside him, “the friar in Majayjay, I think, is a good man. It is a pity we are going there to him.”

“He is white. He is white,” came the meaningful reply. “It is the white man who has taught us.”

Guimó fell silent again. He was running by the side of death. As Elisea had bidden him, so he did.

The tropical darkness hung like a thick, dew-spangled spider web from volcano, mountain peak, tree-top and campanile when the straggling column confronted the barricade hastily thrown across the highway leading into Majayjay. But over this they swarmed without stopping, brushing aside the half hundred conservative old men of the town.

“The friar has escaped by this time,” muttered the pock-marked native disappointedly, as the column pressed forward.

“Where to?” asked Guimó. “Is there not another band of us hastening down from the foothills? Neither to the east nor the north nor the south can the white men, our enemies, take flight. And on the sea our *paraos* are watching. Perhaps, too, you forget how many brown men dwell in this town of Majayjay.”

Now the avenging hundreds were swarming

around the pale sagging pile made up of clustering *convento*, church and bell-tower. A dozen long-flamed flambeaux sent gigantic shadows dancing victoriously upon the white church-front, upon the white walls of the tower, upon the closed panels of the *convento*. The flambeaux stirred uneasily; the shadows of moving men stalked like genii across the pale besieged buildings. On the faces of the besiegers pulsed the menacing reddish light.

The burly chieftain sent a score of men against the *convento*, another score against the church-doors. The noisy splitting and crashing sounded doubly loud through the anxious silence of the black town. Far off in the jak-fruit trees, the flying foxes fought and squealed.

The heavy doors gave way. Guimó saw a few startled bats come fluttering out into the smoke-scented flambeau light. The appointed searchers hastened into the *convento's* depths.

The score of searchers stumbled pellmell up the steps; with a single lunge they crushed in the *sala* doors. By the light of their torches, they saw the bowed figure of Padre Fernando, kneeling humbly before the gilded triptych of the Blessed Virgin and the angels. For a moment, the searchers paused awe-struck. In that moment of pause, from the obscure depths of an open doorway whizzed an arrow and the arrow buried itself quivering in the breast of the gentle Madonna under the gilded lintel.

“ Wherever I go,” it seemed as if the Margarita of years long gone was again half-sobbing, half-whispering, “ I will shoot the arrow and it will come and strike you. It will come as sure as the morning, O white mother with the golden crown! ”

Padre Fernando arose to his feet; the red torch light that shone in his face disclosed naught but mercy and patience there. His hands as he spread them out in a simple little gesture spoke of peace.

Two of the brown men grasped his arms and hurried him down the stairs. When they led him out over the splinters of the *convento* doors, a shout arose from the swarming hundreds waiting calmly in the flambeaux' light. But Guimó did not shout; he was struck dumb by the transfigured face, so serene and so strong, the face of the doomed white man.

“ We've got one,” shouted a drunken native of Majayjay. “ We've got one but there's another. There's another hidden up in the bell-tower. Ha, ha, I saw him creep up there the minute the darkness grew thick enough.”

A shout of derision resounded from plaza to sea. Those whom the chieftain had sent to break the campanile door came back and reported that they could ascend the half-ruined stairs only to the belfry platform. Here the trapdoor had been immovably fastened down. On the top of the door, up behind the silent bells, the other white man cowered.

“Ladders!” called the burly chieftain. A dozen Majayjay inhabitants scattered obediently and after many minutes returned with four bamboo ladders which looked old and weather-beaten. Deliberately these ladders were thonged together to increase their length. With no show of haste, the ladder was raised against the white wall of the campanile.

“Now who will go up?” called the chieftain in his rumbling voice.

“I,” answered Guimó and Guimó was accepted—not only because he always kept close to the chieftain’s side but also because the chieftain liked him and had sized him up as no sodden, empty-headed *tao*.

Guimó drew himself up the frail ladder, his snake-bladed dagger between his teeth. Like a goblin, his fantastic shadow danced on the flambeau-lighted wall. Now long bamboo poles were pressing against the middle lengths of the ladder lest the fugitive above hurl the steep ladder and its burden backward.

Guimó quickly reached the base of the narrow window. In this window, on a thick axle, one of the big bells hung. Then he saw flaring up past him a torch bound fast to the end of a pole. Its light shone in around the big bell, filling the belfry with a ruddy glow. Cringing against the farther wall knelt a haggard fugitive. Padre Miguel! All that the flaring torch told Guimó in a moment.

Guimó drew himself up on the narrow ledge

which projected sturdily from the four sides of the belfry's base. The cringing man within jumped to his feet like one who had forgotten in whom he trusted, and over the axle of the bell lunged for the boyish brown-cheeked avenger — the boy who would seek happiness by sinking into the great comet of the hunters. But Guimó slipped nimbly to one side of the deep-arched window and was safe on the outside of thick walls. On the narrow ledge — so far above the upturned faces of the human swarm below — he crawled around a corner of the belfry and was presently in front of another bell-hung window. Now the torch at the end of the long pole was flaring and smoking blindingly in front of the deep window on the opposite side of the tower.

Too quickly, however, the terror-stricken man within turned from the decoying light and caught sight of Guimó preparing to enter the little chamber. Again Guimó had to slide along on the ledge to save himself from the wild impact of hands. From window to window around the four sides of the campanile the torch hounded the white man who did not understand, blinding him as it glared in over the bell-tops. From window to window — always on the obscure sides of the tower — Guimó dodged like a shadow. The blinding glare of the torch pouring in one window left the others in confounding blackness and the swift passage of the torch from one window to another bewildered the hunted man within more and more. Guimó,

crouching on the narrow ledge, could hear him panting and running from one bell-hung window to another. But the fugitive could no longer guess where his strong young nemesis crouched. This tragic game of hide-and-seek continued long. Guimó did not hasten and the hundreds swarming below looked on patiently.

Now Guimó was crouching, ready to glide under the bell and in. The torch was glaring in an adjoining deep window. Past his window, the weary fugitive swept and the brief moment after Guimó slipped inside and stood erect on his feet, his pitiless brown eyes burning.

In his strong, quivering hand a dagger flashed — flashed like a message across the seas to the homeless Angela. The white man grasped the upraised arm and the battle was on. Guimó heard the friar panting; he felt the added strength of the murdered Juan Concha hardening his own obedient muscles.

The dagger dropped with a clang and the strong grasp on Guimó's arm relaxed. He freed the arm and sent his two strong hands shooting for the white man's throat. Wildly the white man tore at the choking hands and — vainly. Back toward the open window where the torch light danced, Guimó swiftly forced his opponent.

"*Aba*, you are afraid now," panted Guimó, "for you remember how you yourself said with your own mouth that God would not hold his anger forever!"

Now the friar's back was pressed against the heavy bell axle. Out, farther out over the empty fire-lit spaces, Guimó bent his enemy's body. Now the torch touched the torn down-hanging stole and domino and a hurrying flame swept up them. A wild scream hushed the swarming hundreds below; Guimó thought of the wild creak of Fort Santiago's gate that dark night it opened for him. The balance was broken and the white man who had failed to understand fell horribly, all in flames, through those empty spaces down to the hard-beaten earth. And Guimó's friend, the earth, struck the death-blow.

"That little for the lost Angela," muttered Guimó aloud as he picked up the serpent-bladed dagger.

Descending the frail ladder, he heard his silver locket strike against the rounds. As Margarita, his mother, had commanded him, he had kept it hung beneath his shirt all the many years. Now after the struggle, it swung out in the red flambeau light as if to chide him.

Down on the ground he saw the hundreds moving across the dark plaza in the direction of the quiet sea, their flambeaux lighting the way. He ran till he reached the side of his chieftain.

"Why do we go to the sea?" he asked, breathing heavily.

"Some of us who belong to this town," rumbled the chieftain, "have prepared a good torture for Friar Fernando. Just wait. You shall see

and tell me if it is not what the white devils merit.”

The hundreds were swarming quietly over the warm sand of the beach. Close to the water's edge a white-robed gentle man stood serene in the grip of his captors.

The chieftain stepped into a long outriggered canoe and seated himself in the prow of it. Next, the two guards led Padre Fernando to a seat on the fore outrigger.

“Now you get in, Guimó,” commanded the chieftain; so Guimó stepped into the *banca** and squatted down behind the man from across the seas whose heart, he saw, was serene. Other brown men crowded in behind and the *bancero*† began plying his paddle.

Four other *bancas* filled with natives moved slowly along by the side of the chieftain's canoe. The red light of the swaying flambeaux cast their reflections across the still waters in weirdly long trembling bars. Only the steady splash of the paddles broke the quietude of the black sea.

Guimó saw looming up ahead of the *banca* a square stockade of poles planted in the sand. Many feet above the water the poles towered up. Into one side of the stockade a narrow door-like opening had been cut and a platform erected before it. Through the tall crevices between poles, Guimó caught sight of several formless

*A canoe.

†One who paddles a canoe.

phosphorescent creatures slowly throbbing in their prison.

“*Dios*, the living jellyfish!” Guimó almost cried aloud.

The burly chieftain lifted himself from the prow of the *banca* up on the waiting platform. Next, the peaceful white-faced man was given a hand in ascending. His guards followed; then Guimó. From a canoe gliding up close at hand the chieftain received a flambeau. On the far edge of the platform, behind the padre, Guimó stood shuddering, his eyes fixed on the devilish throbbing jellyfish inside the stockade. He shuddered while the guards stripped the clothing from the meek, sorrowful white man. The white man had a kind heart. He had not cared when the tamarind pods were gathered.

Guimó watched the brown men lead the victim to the narrow opening and point out to him the light-emitting throbbing hulks of the jellyfish. He saw the sad padre struggle with the chill of horror that seemed to blow up from the inhabited water, and pitied him.

“We heard,” explained one of the guards deliberately, “that you feared the pretty jellyfish. Your people told us.”

“Guimó, hold the torch,” ordered the chieftain.

He held the torch while his chieftain took a paddle and carefully shoved the jellyfish toward the farther wall of the dark stockade. The guards thrust their captive through the narrow opening

and lowered him into the waist-deep water. . . . Already the crowded jellyfish were throbbing their slow way back into the clear water where a man stood motionless. Guimó rushed shudderingly to the narrow opening and held his flaring torch well within the horrible cell. On his cheek, he felt the chieftain's calm breath.

"Chieftain," muttered Guimó, "why do we so far forget the mercy we wish for eternally? Even the unjust earth cannot forgive this!"

The throbbing jellyfish were now almost brushing the quiet figure with their streaming poisonous tentacles.

At the unexpected words of the boyish torch-bearer, Padre Fernando looked upward and saw the flaring torchlight shining dazzlingly on the free-hanging silver locket, shaped like a miniature Gothic window.

"Son," murmured the white man very tenderly, looking up at him wistfully. "Son." . . . The stinging, waving tentacles were upon him. Then Guimó heard the twitching lips choke out the low words: "Poor little Margarita."

Guimó slowly backed from the opening; he let the torch fall helplessly to the platform. He pressed the palms of his hands against his ears to shut out the sounds of the perishing one in the phosphorus-frothy water.

The chieftain, looking at him curiously, lowered himself into the waiting *banca*; the guards followed. Still Guimó stood image-like — alone on

the platform, his hands pressed deafeningly against his ears.

“Are you going to stay there all night?” shouted the chieftain.

Then Guimó crawled awkwardly into the *banca* and the canoes paddled silently toward the shore where the hundreds waited in the high-flung light.

“He called you son,” said the chieftain sternly, as the *bancas* glided over the quiet water. “Are you his son?”

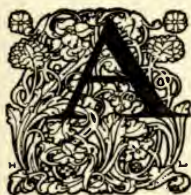
“I am,” answered Guimó in a voice which sounded a long way off.

“Then you are not one of us.” The chieftain’s rumbling voice was sharp and accusing. “How can we know that you will not betray us? . . . Well, we have many days in which to think that over.”

But Guimó was listening elsewhere. He could no longer hear a sound of life from the prison of the noiseless throbbing jellyfish. *Abao*, what an end to his running by the side of death for the sake of his beautiful world gone to dust!

CHAPTER XXI

ON THE RED ANTS' HILL



ABOVE the nodding sunlit tree-tops of Dao, above those of Majayjay, above every brown town nestling under the endless glistening *kalubihans* which mark out the Buglas coast, the flag of the new white race of devils floated triumphantly. Day after day, from far off in the hills where the purling song of the volcano's little brooks tinkled faithfully, Guimó gazed wistfully at the strange red and white stripes, at the strange star-spangled blue field. Many times he watched, from his captivity in the hills, the marching columns of blue-clad soldiers. Many times he watched queer little square flags flashing hurriedly from right to left or from left to right as the messages were wig-wagged through the drowsy air, from the top of Majayjay's white campanile. Wistfully he watched the strangers from across the ocean, their comings and their goings. They had promised, and their ruler away off in America had promised, peace, happiness, freedom, to the people of the islands. But the people of the islands — what did Guimó care for them! *Abao*, they were not

his people, no, no, not those whom he had heard calling affectionately to him as he stood that day on the crest of the *cordillera* with a tiny wisp of smoke always hurrying away not far above him.

With all the irrepressible glory of youth, he felt that these people of the beautiful flag would be his people. They were the bringers of peace and happiness. They would be his true friends. Still he dreaded dismally to put his great hope to the test, lest — lest — No — no — he would not even think that heart-breaking thought!

His people! The spirit of youth breathed through them — from his far-away watch-tower hill he could see that — just as it breathed through him.

His people! Yet the barefooted country women always uttered the words — “*Los Americanos!*” — in a fearful whisper and bade their children ever to keep well beyond the range of the new white devil’s evil eye.

While the coast towns had fallen peacefully into the hands of the Americans, the *cordillera* and the foothills still sheltered many guerrilla bands not yet subdued. At the head of one of these bands stood a dark burly chieftain; and Guimó was still one of the swarming hundreds who followed him.

But the chieftain never forgot that Guimó was a white man’s son. The hundreds of Filipinos of the guerrilla band never forgot. Every hour of the waking day, Guimó felt eyes studying him

covertly, suspiciously, vigilantly. When he drew near to a chattering group, he found again and again that the murmuring talk ceased — only to begin again as soon as he was drifting out of earshot. Whenever he climbed to a hill-top, he found that he had companions who chatted softly among themselves and left him outside the ring of distinguishable words, left him watching with narrowed eyes the strange far-away rippling flag of his new-found people.

Fervently he had sworn to the chieftain that his heart abided with his mother's people, that he had no wish to turn traitor.

"Traitor to whom?" the chieftain had demanded. "To your white people or to us?"

"Not to you, chieftain."

"We'll see. We'll see. We have plenty of time to think that over."

The chieftain, nevertheless, kept Guimó much beside him, for the lad possessed friendly eyes and a good head. Once more Guimó was a brigand, but a brigand grown weary of destroying rich old *haciendas* dozing in the sun, weary of burning helpless villages nestling in bamboo thickets which creaked out the secret of the king's little horns, weary of having to see the unprotected cut down all shivering and praying, and weary, too, of not knowing which way to go. He knew he was not a soldier against the invaders. He was only a *pulahan*,* a "red," and marked

*Outlaw.

by the sign of the red cotton cloth. He was only a captive of the bloody soldier-brigands likewise marked by the sign of the red cotton cloth. From them he knew he could expect no mercy, for he had seen them sink more and more into the downward-sucking mire of blood-lust. He had been with them when they murdered their own people dwelling in their little houses and watching the water's depth on the fields green with new rice; he had been with them when they wantonly felled glorious rows of fire trees in bloom. Much they talked of the fatherland and of the great Philippine republic to be. Much they turned their own fertile plains into blackened and treeless wastes.

"It will be a grand republic," Guimó thought discouragedly times without number.

He wished and wished that his chieftain would venture into an attack upon the blue-clad Americans. Well, they would have to soon, he thought, for the *Americanos* were fast occupying the villages that stretched back from the coast. Every day the strangers pressed a little closer toward the foothills. *Abao*, the quicker they came and took him captive, the better! He was sick of his fellow brigands, the savages; he was sick of his own days of savagery.

One day, at last, the chieftain's scouts — their bare legs grayed with mud — came running into the encampment in the midst of the foothills.

"A small detachment of Americans, sir,"

panted the foremost, "is setting out from the village of Antipolo."

"They seem to be heading for the village of Bita-ogan," vouchsafed a second. Bita-ogan lay but three miles to the south of Antipolo and like Antipolo it lay hidden in the foothill fringe.

"I think, sir," said a third scout excitedly, "I think surely the American officer believes that to possess Bita-ogan is but to walk into it—like this." He made a flourish with a hand moist from drops of sweat. "I can hear him say that it is no farther inland than Antipolo and therefore it is very easy and safe." He chuckled, satisfied.

"How many *Americanos*?" asked the chieftain slowly.

"Maybe forty — maybe fifty, sir."

"Good. Good. They think my part of the foothills is filled with sleepy-heads. . . . Was I not wise in waiting? They have grown careless; they have grown confident. That is what I wanted. I am now sure of my game. They will be easier to shoot than ducks."

Guimó was one of the band that crept stealthily down in the shelter of the low knoblike hills, down through the high grass which waved after the fashion of sea-water in the wind. As he had been commanded, so he walked by the burly chieftain's side. On the farther side of the knoblike hills the Americans came struggling forward along a winding, mud-filled trail toward Bita-ogan.

Guimó was one of those who stood crowded

knee-deep in the shallow waters of the Baclayan River. Tall sedges half filled the stream; thickets overhung the steep banks; horse-tall cogon stretched back from the banks up over the clustering hills sprinkled with bamboo clumps. All these afforded a mask of invisibility to the quiet, patiently-waiting swarm of brown men who knew the hills as the deer knows its runway. The *darawidao* whistled its nine sweet notes.

The van-couriers of the little blue-clad detachment came on, struggling in a wide-spread line through the tall cogon or stumbling through the miry road. But the noiseless Filipinos waiting patiently behind sedge and thicket, bamboo clump and cogon had cautiously stationed themselves a wise distance back from both sides of the trail. As long as the van-couriers kept an arm's length away from them, no alarm would be sounded, no brown face would be seen.

The little detachment was fording the Baclayan River. At that moment, the soldier-brigands poured upon the men in blue. Down from the cogon, out of the thickets along the banks, out of the very river itself, from front and rear, from right and left, the brown men swarmed.

The American rifles blazed; the Filipino rifles sputtered back. Guimó watched the blue-clad soldiers drop and the river water redden where it flowed over the rocks. He watched his own brown companions fall backward into the water or sink silently into the sharp grass.

But a moment and with keen-edged bolos the Filipinos were slashing the Americans huddled in mid-stream. With bayonets and rifle butts, the Americans kept up their cramped desperate fighting. They could not keep it up for long. Fewer and fewer stood there in the reddened water. The brown men crowded in on them as inexhaustibly — so it seemed — as a locust cloud.

The score of Americans remaining threw down their rifles in surrender, the odds being hopeless. But Guimó's companions still slashed and struck, wild in their blood-feast. Only a dozen of the white devils stood there now and still the gore-covered bolos flashed.

Guimó ran to the sedgy bank where the chieftain was trying to bandage a bullet-wound in his forearm.

"For the love of God, Chieftain," cried Guimó, "stop them. They will kill the last one. *Abao*, can't you stop them?"

"Yes, I can stop them," answered the chieftain imperturbably.

"Stop them then!" Guimó's eyes were blazing dangerously.

"Oh, all right." And the chieftain shouted loudly at the frenzied men in the stream.

Only three Americans were left to be brought before the chieftain. One was a short, red-faced man with blood dripping from his forehead. The second was an older man wearing a heavy drooping mustache. The third — the moment Guimó

caught that American's eye, such things as faces and races and colors and beliefs were forgotten — the third man was his friend, the American of his hopes. Guimó's troubled eyes replied to the message in the American's.

The *pulahanes* with their three prisoners retreated swiftly back into the foothills. Outside of their own encampment, they halted. The chieftain called Guimó to him and said chuckling: "You asked me to save these men. You see that I did. Well, I'm glad of it, for what they're going to get will be a good lesson to their brothers. We'll take your friend first, you son of a white man. *Aba*, don't bother to say that you are not his friend."

With his face drawn and frowning, Guimó watched his brigand companions mockingly tear the clothes from the friendly American's body. He watched the two other prisoners being bound hand and foot to a pair of kapok trees.

"Here is one," he heard someone shout from a distant thicket of wild trees. All the *pulahanes* hastened to the thicket whence the shout had come. As they led his American along, Guimó proudly noticed how the muscles beneath the white skin rippled at every stride, how strong were the limbs, how supple and beautiful the lines of the torso. The American had thick hair as black as his own. Guimó liked the cleft in the American's chin; he liked the mobile, friendly, masculinely-chiseled lines of brow and cheek and jaw. Once

more Guimó caught the message in the gray eager eyes.

Now the brown men were driving four stakes in the ground at the edge of the thicket and cutting a length of rope into four sections.

“All right,” rumbled the chieftain.

A dozen *pulahanes* threw the American on his back. With deft fingers they tied his hands and his feet to the four stakes. Guimó's American was stretched taut on the thin shaded grass. Once more Guimó looked into the gray eager eyes. The blood throbbed in his temples. The savages would kill his American. It was over a nest of the fierce red ants they had tied him. He saw them crawling up out of the short grass, up on the white man's body, the hurrying, fire-jawed red ants.

Guimó was trembling, his mind in a flame-darting chaos. He wanted to kill, kill, kill. That was all he could feel—kill every *pulahan*, kill himself, kill the poor American. But his good sense stayed the furious hand clenching the bolo.

Slowly, then, the fire died in his mind and the air about him became as clear as the air after a typhoon. Like a vision, his climactic plan arose from the depths of his thoughts. Only by awakening the ancient slumbering terror of the supernatural, could Guimó ever hope—and that but faintly—to deliver his American and himself from the swarming *pulahanes*. With his mind he would have to fight; his bolo was as useless as so much guitar wood. It must be his wits against

the overwhelming numbers of the brigands; his mind against their bodies.

So Guimó hurled his bolo quivering into the earth. All the eyes gloating over the American now fixed themselves on him in astonishment. Guimó opened his shining eyes to their utmost width and stared into space; he let the spittle drip from his sagging lips; he lifted both hands above his head and threw himself face downward on the short grass. He slowly turned his face until his ear pressed against the earth.

The brown men all around him stared and shuddered. One or two presently began to speak.

“*Hepos!*” warned Guimó throatily, his body shaking from head to foot.

“What is it, Guimó?” asked the chieftain uncomfortably.

“*Hepos!*” warned Guimó once more.

“*Dios mio!*” exclaimed the chieftain. “What do you see?”

“*Hepos!* . . . I am listening.”

“Mother of mercy, Guimó!”

Guimó kept his whole body shaking awesomely. The fascinated men continued staring at him apprehensively.

All at once, Guimó sprang to his feet with a loud cry. With his hands raised as if to ward off the hot breath of boiling lava, with his eyes still staring and his body quivering, he backed swiftly away from the place of torture. The

brown men crouched back and opened up a wide path for him.

“ In God’s name, what is it you have heard? ” begged the chieftain.

Guimó slowly opened his upraised hand. Between thumb and forefinger glowed the pearl, his *mutia*.

“ Do you see the pearl from the *kokok*’s nest? Well do you know the virtue that lies in it. By this, I have heard the rising voices of the *lulids*.^{*} They are climbing upward—upward. We have desecrated by our standing here the palace roof of the king of the *lulids*. Woe unto us all, for they are rising! Woe unto us when we feel their unseen hands at our throats of flesh! Woe unto us for they will burn our encampment! Woe unto us for touching the white man here when the *lulids*’ fat bodies are also white! ”

“ Set the American free,” cried the chieftain.

“ No,” commanded Guimó loudly. “ They will do that.” Guimó knew that an instant’s pause now might bring forth doubting. “ Flee! . . . Flee for our lives. Flee to the forest where live the enemies of the *lulids*! ”

As though the hosts of the evil one were after him, Guimó turned and ran. As he ran he howled.

Ahead of him, behind him, at his side fled the panic-stricken, fear-frenzied hundreds of the *pulahanes*. On through their encampment they

^{*}Supernatural, white-skinned underground beings.

tore, stopping for nothing. Guimó howled. . . . Up toward the little *caingin** farms which showed the edge of the mountain forest, they raced, breathless, trembling. Guimó could howl no longer. But the frenzied thud of hundreds of feet as they crashed onward kept the fugitives at the proper pitch.

Guimó gradually let himself drop toward the rear of the fleeing swarm. Suddenly, he gave a loud shout and dropped writhing on the grass, his hands tearing at his neck.

“A *lulid* has caught him!” shrieked an old brigand beside him. One glance at Guimó writhing on the ground and the *pulahanes* tore on more desperately than before. On and upward they fled for their throats.

When the crashing noise of their flight began to sound far-away, when they were half-hidden behind wild trees and the tall cogon, Guimó arose to his feet and sped, crouching, stooping, dodging, back to the encampment.

There for a brief minute, he stopped and touched a match to a pile of blankets in the nearest crude hut; he stopped again and poured a bottle of oil on a heap of red pillows in the next hut and set them on fire.

Then he flew to the edge of the thicket where his American lay stretched on the red ants’ hill. *Abao*, poor *Americano*, crazed, delirious!

*Small, recently cleared plots.

Guimó pulled his bolo out of the ground where he had hurled it and slashed the four binding ropes. He pulled the white man to his feet and away from the nest. He fought with the red ants until he had crushed and brushed the last one away.

He freed the two blue-clad soldiers from the kapok trees. He heard them cursing and muttering in their strange tongue. When they saw his American, one shook his head and said, "Poor Edd!" The other shuddered and muttered, "Poor Lavigne!"

"Is my American," puzzled Guimó, "Pooredd or Poorlavigne?"

One of the American's arms rested heavily on Guimó's shoulders as the four weary-footed men struggled hastily along the deep-mired trail leading to Antipolo. Guimó looked back, his eyes lighted up. Thick clouds of smoke puffed up from the valley of the encampment.

Nevertheless, he kept murmuring "*Madali*,"* to the blue-clad Americans helping him bear his burden through the deep mud or through the sharp-bladed cogon, but they could not understand him and they could not make much haste. From the heart of a distant lonely shrub there was borne to them the *darawidao's* cheerful whistle, soaring magnificently — "La-le-la — La-le-la — La-le-la." . . . Guimó had found his

*Hurry.

people, those who had called to him that day, so long before, when he paused on the *cordillera's* crest.

So he entered the soldier-filled village of Antipolo and became both an American and a hero, between rise and set of sun.

CHAPTER XXII

THE BELOVED AMERICAN



YEAR and a half passed.

A black Philippine night hung over Majayjay. In the spacious, grayish white, steep-roofed house of Edd Lavigne two lamps were burning, making the tiny conch panes in the window panels glow like opals and casting trapeziform sheets of light out on the silent grassy street.

Edd Lavigne rocked slowly in his low broad-armed rocker and with thoughts far away blew one smoke ring after another. Guimó, perched in a long-legged chair near the pier glass, thrummed his guitar and sang the old song of "Love's Happiness."

*"Gugma ñga ginkalipayan
Sa sulud sang dughan! . . .
A-hay — A-hay — A-ha-ay!
Masubu ñga pamatian."*

Many the time Guimó had sung this song for his American. And every time his American had asked him to sing it again.

When Guimó had finished the last verses —

“ *Kag ang kabulahanan
Sang dughan ko.*”*

Edd Lavigne fell silent as he always did.

“ *Abao*, sir, I think you are very sad,” said Guimó, studying his master’s face. “ I think you are so far from your home and your people.”

“ That isn’t it so much, Guimó.”

“ We wonder very much why do not you go to America. Everyone say you are such a good American.”

“ Oh, I like this life in the Philippines. This blamed South Sea existence has its advantages. It’s a different world, Guimó. I love it and I’m afraid of it. . . . I wish I could catch the rhythm of it, run it right down to the earth.”

“ How do you catch that, sir? ”

“ By watching you, you handsome dog.”

“ *Abao*, sir, I am proud that I am a rhythm.”

“ You are a dandy rhythm, Guimó. When you sit and sing me your songs, when you and Corazon dance your mountain-dances, your Negrito dances, your *Cariñosa*,† and lord knows what all, I have that precious rhythm; but I’ll be damned if I can keep it in me.”

“ I am sorry, sir.”

Edd Lavigne arose and strolled over to the majolica pedestal on which his violin case always

*And the happiness
Of my heart.

†“ Affectionate.” A native dance.

lay. Guimó watched him pick up the violin and tune it lovingly. Guimó invariably hung up his guitar when he saw his master do that.

Then Guimó sat like the king in the enchanted castle while Edd wielded the magic of music — music which uttered the heart thoughts of a wide world. And these were thoughts which no man's words could express — thoughts which Guimó had but dimly dreamed of. Often the barefooted natives stopped out on the street beneath the windows and listened until the *buen Americano* had laid down his instrument.

Many times, in the newly acquired English, Guimó had told his American the wonderful narrative of his own life. But he cursed his own powerlessness in any of the tongues that he knew when his master miraculously brought the violin to life and bade it speak. "That violin must have been sleeping with my shadow and dancing with my dreams," he mused, "for it knows more of my own life than I do."

And this night, as on many and many another lonely Majayjay night, his master sighed deeply and fairly flung the violin into its case.

"Ah, Guimó, it's no use," he muttered hopelessly. "I am better off here."

"But you are unhappy, are not you, sir?"

"Not the way I would be there — in New York, my son. There I would have to make good — I would have to make the music I would write win me fame and win me wealth. That's what I must

do when I get back to America. Ah, you can't understand it, can you, Guimó? Here I can listen and live and dream of that future day and not worry myself about facing it except in a vague, pleasant way. . . . I tell you, I dread to go back to New York. When I get there again, Guimó, I've got to—I've simply got to make good. I must have the money and, of course, I'd like to see my picture in the magazines. Oh, you can't know what it is to be as thirsty as a desert for those things. It's a kind of glorious curse."

"What can you do with those things, sir?"

"Live, Guimó, live; or go dying for years without them."

Guimó thought over these things and then said regretfully: "I wish I could help to you, sir."

"You can; you do. When you are with me, I feel that something or other which I must translate into music. And that music, son, will be the thing a continent will fall in love with. I know it will, Guimó."

"Aba, why do not you go to America, sir?"

"I hate to make the throw, Guimó. I'm afraid to, I guess. There's so tremendous much to lose."

"And to gain, I think."

"Yes, that's also true."

Edd Lavigne and Guimó sat thinking a long time in the big *sala*. Over their heads, the little house lizards darted upside down across the woven bamboo ceiling. Once a gecko behind

a post uttered its descending series of resounding yells.

"Say, Guimó," asked Edd soberly out of the midst of his long thoughts, "have you ever noticed how death seems to be right at a man's shoulder all the time—in this part of the world?"

"Not at your shoulder, master," the brown boy replied gently. "My eyes are very good but I cannot see him there. No, sir."

"Oh, maybe it's these still, long nights, son." Edd seemed to be retelling an old, old story. "Anyway, something starts me grinding out such nonsensical thoughts a good many times."

"It is very nonsense, sir," came Guimó's low reproachful words. "*Abao*, you are young and strong, very. You cannot die, master. I will have victorious again upon the bad dog of *Molang*." The brown friendly eyes stared out into the blackness that squatted giant-like in the little garden.

"You're a good sort, son," Edd said softly, his eyes fixed on his friend. "I don't know whether you understand or not, but back in the States it used to be different. There it was life that stuck by us and death was in a kind of a valley over a hill. Here, though, I can't help but feel that death is our steady right-hand man, ready to swing his strong arms around us and to let us take a good long rest. Did any such ideas ever strike you, Guimó?"

"I have thought, sir." The brown clean-

chiseled face broke into a smile. "But I am not afraid. . . . I have found you, and my people. I wish only very much to see the land of America. There, I think, it will be happiness."

"Will it? I wonder — will it? . . . But just take a look at Majayjay now, son. It's enough to make anybody think he hears the fanning of black wings. Oh, don't grin. I'm thinking of something bigger than little hard-working bats. . . . I wonder sometimes if we will ever see America and that happiness you talk so much about. It's a dickens of a long ride to America."

"*Abao*, master, do not say such words. It makes me to feel very sad. You will not die so far away from your people. No, no! You will go to America and you will take me there to my people."

Guimó stood up, face uplifted and shining, brown hands clenched. If need be he would once more drive that dog of *Molang* to the grassy hills where only the black rocks dwelt in sleep. Those who flew in the black night would never steal his beloved American away.

Edd chuckled. With a sigh of relief, Guimó smiled down at him. It was well that this talk could not live in the light of the faithful lamps.

"Well, I hope the cholera won't cross our channel any sooner than it has to. It's a nuisance, always prowling around from one island to another. But I'm not worrying about that. I

know how to fight that better than these smothering black nights.”

“The black night has always been my friend, master. Many times I have told you.”

And they both fell into a reverie — the white man and the brown — only more earnest and deep-searching from the rising and the falling of women’s voices singing a song of mourning under a far-away thatch.

Suddenly Edd said: “Run over to the town hall, Guimó, and bring me the mail. Chonchez must have it sorted out by this time.”

“Yes, sir, I hurry. The mail from the beautiful America makes you to be happy.”

As Guimó made haste along the empty street, the soft black air brushed his cheeks. He looked upward to see if he could catch the fanning of the mysterious wings. But all that his peering eyes could discover was the motionless blanket of cloud which had spread itself tenderly over the drowsy coast towns. Down and down it had settled until it rested on the tiny roof of the ghostly bell-tower. *Abao*, the black night was ever a friend and it would keep watch over the beloved American also.

The beloved American! Those eighteen months of wonder shuttled happily through the brown boy’s thoughts as he hastened on. The master had not gone back to the United States with the volunteers. When his term of enlistment was up, he had watched his mates crowd on the transport

and vanish out of his sight. He had stayed behind and become one of the government teachers. Hundreds of brown, barefooted, stiffly-starched children had come flocking to the improvised schoolrooms up in the empty *convento*. Here the master had done his best by them. A "Moro-Moro" he had called it at first, this American plan of teaching the Filipino children English as the bottom step in the long flight leading from the old-time dusk to the dusk of to-day. But he no longer called it a Moro-Moro. This lifting of a simple people up a very little and forward a very little, he declared grimly, was a man's-size job. . . . Guimó smiled now, remembering how his American had been driven frantic by the assistant teachers up in the *convento*, a native man and woman, both past middle life and both rare pedagogues of the Spanish regime. With their expeditiously acquired primer knowledge of the new language, they had proved in themselves a thrilling responsibility and a ceaseless care. But the master's gray eyes kept up their twinkling. . . .

"*Abao, Chonchez*," Guimó said reprovingly to the fat postmaster up in the town hall, "have you no more than that for the master?"

"*Dios mio!*" Chonchez shrugged his round sloping shoulders. "I am a very busy official of the government and have no time to write letters to your Mr. Lavigne."

"You—you write letters to him!" Guimó

laughed mockingly. "Do you think that you are that happy place, America?"

Chonchez had nothing to say. With the expression of a martyr on his fat face, he caught a floury moth and held it carefully over the hot sooty edge of the lamp chimney.

"This kind burns the best of any," he sighed and wearily laid in Guimó's hands two magazines—weeks old already—and a letter in a long white envelope. Thunder blast it, it had come only from the capital of the province! It would not make his master happy. It had not traveled from the other side of the world.

Back in the steep-roofed house where the two lamps burned, Guimó found his master slowly rocking in the low broad-armed chair, with strong fingertips pressed against the straight heavy eyebrows.

"Are you thinking again, Mr. Edd? It is not good. I know the black night is our friend. . . . Here is a letter only, and two magazines. They are from America."

"Thanks, Guimó."

Guimó took down his guitar from its peg in the wall and let his brown fingers dance whatever plaintive figure they chose over the music-haunted strings.

"Lord!" Edd cried out all at once, very tensely. "This is the seventeenth of the month, isn't it?"

Guimó's fingers stopped where they were.

“ Yes, sir. I remember for I put it down in my expense book.”

For a moment the nervous crackling of a sheet of paper sounded loud in the quiet *sala*. Then Edd leaped from the rocker, leaving it to go clanking back and forth over the polished floor.

“ Guimó, you can go along with me. It’s blamed queer where those women are sticking. They should have been here by dark anyway.”

“ Women? ”

“ Two American women, son. Old Stelton writes that he was to start them out from the capital this morning, with a *quilez* and a good cow. Something’s gone wrong, but that’s an old story out here. Lord knows what might have happened in these long hours of dark. We’d best follow right up the coast road till we meet them. We’ve got to get busy and do something.”

Edd dropped his revolver into a handy blouse pocket. Guimó girded on his bolo. Leaving the lamps burning in the steep-roofed house, the master and his lover ventured out into the soft, low-stretching blackness. They roused the shriveled ferry-man from his dozing and bade him row them swiftly across the river. The *banca* painted its hurried path in feathery lines of phosphorescent fire.

“ Hell,” muttered Edd a few moments later as he strode along in the cavern hewn by the road as it twisted under the arching palms of the *kalubihan*. “ It’s hell to send a couple of poor women

out into the wilderness like this. God knows it's bad enough for a man marooned in a Philippine town. The government is crazy but I don't wonder at that either. Oh, I knew there was a shipload coming, men and women both. Here we are looking for two of the poor souls. That's the way it goes. But to send out two women along that wild road without an escort! "

" But it was morning — and safe — when they started — "

" That's it. Something has happened to them."

" *Abao*, sir, are not the women of America beautiful and full of happiness also? "

" It's hard to find happiness anywhere, son, even in America."

" It cannot be, sir. I do not understand."

Edd had no answer. He only hurried along the faint crooked streak which marked the highway.

" *Abao*, sir, and who will take care to the women from America now? "

" God and the government. Both needed since the poor souls are going to be teachers, son. One's been assigned to Dao, according to old Stelton's letter. Her name's Helen Cravath, Miss Helen Cravath. It's a pleasant-sounding name, now isn't it? The other one's name, I think, is Mrs. Alma Hanan; and she's going to Inauayan, away south of Dao yet. Away out in the *bosque*,* both of the poor ladies."

*Wilderness.

Edd and Guimó tramped on past blind masses which would shine in the light of the sun as fields of sugar cane and maize. By and by they came into the outskirts of a hamlet. No long golden quills of light reached out from crannies in the thatch of the huts. There were no sounds to be heard in the darkness save the cross barking of curs behind the brambles of bamboo.

A sharp bend in the road brought the two seekers within view of a scene which haunted them long afterward. Straight toward them, it seemed, a *tao* in fluttering rags came running and stumbling, the red light from his high-lifted torch pouring all a-tremble over him. And beyond the *tao*, at a distance of a dozen thatch houses, a crowded circle of black-silhouetted figures pressed uneasily around the small windows of a stalled *quilez*. There five or six waving torches flickeringly reddened the village street, the tiny spindle-legged houses, the bodies of brown men and women, and the motionless gray cow.

“The *quilez* of the women of America!” muttered Guimó.

The running, stumbling *tao* was almost upon them before the torch showed him that the face of one of the two pedestrians was white. He stopped and shouted a few strange words which shot to the ears of the circle around the *quilez*. In an instant, Edd saw the distant torches jammed into the earth and smothered.

The same instant he saw Guimó leap for the

ragged *tao* who stood shivering near by. In a twinkling, the *mantio's* son had wrenched the torch from an aching hand. The *tao* groaned and disappeared into a thicket.

Now from down the black narrow street a scream of terror came floating.

“ God’s sake, Guimó! ”

“ Run, sir,” hissed the boy. “ They steal away the lady from America. They destroy to her for they say she bring the poison to kill the brown people. The *cochero** of the cow — he has dead now — of cholera! ”

By the time Guimó had finished his panting speech, as he ran with the torch flame streaming out behind him, Edd could faintly make out the outlines of the *quilez* now approaching and hear the scuffing of the gray cow’s hoofs.

No one sat on the *cochero's* seat. The hard benches within were also empty of travelers. The unlatched door banged to and fro. Only some travel-worn luggage tied up beside the driver’s seat and to one of the benches inside could be seen by the red light.

In another moment Guimó’s torch was shining plainly on a white-clad girlish figure standing quietly in the middle of the deserted highway. Behind her, half in the shadow, an older woman stood cowering, a strange velvet hat clinging all awry to her head. As God was good, the ladies were safe.

*Driver.

But Edd saw only the slender, round-cheeked woman with hair disheveled and showing loose-hanging strands. The face was pale and tired, but smiling. "She is smiling," thought Edd. "It must be a miracle."

Suddenly he felt the warm blood of shame redden his cheeks. Awkwardly he dropped the revolver back into its pocket. The tossing flame of the torch glared fitfully and showered strange lights and shadows upon the little group. The red dancing light swayed and flung itself like a terror-stricken animal trying to tear itself from its trap. But through it all, Edd saw only the wonderful expression of serenity on the girlish face.

Then Guimó looked upon the tired girl in white. "*Abao*, that is the happiness from America," and the words seemed to sing a little song.

Finally Edd found his tongue.

"It must have been a miracle," he stammered.

Guimó wondered whatever a miracle could be, while his master and the new lady talked, he so amazed, she so serene. Surely enough her name was Helen Cravath, for she was indeed the lady of the letter. And what a strange lovely lady she was, with a little smile always on her tired lips and with a light shining in her eyes. Guimó found his gaze always rushing wonderingly back to her gentle face — and this was a queer matter, too, for the older lady, Mrs. Hanan, likewise of the

letter, was sobbing inconsolably, now that the strain had ended, and his brown boyish eyes were not on her in the fashion that humanity's eyes wander irresistibly to those who weep. But, 'sus *Maria Josep*, who could help forgetting the one in tears? Was not the smiling one the dear lady of beautiful America?

The little group began to move slowly down the narrow street. Helen was telling her story — the story of the *cochero's* dying there by the roadside, and of the villagers' laying hands on her to destroy her as a poisoner, and of the fulness of her faith. Never resting, Guimó's eyes peered vigilantly into the huge unsteady shadows which danced weirdly around his friends and himself.

Like the beloved American, he was listening eagerly, his boldly-moulded lips parted in wonder. After the unrest, Helen's voice sounded marvelously quiet and sweet. Then he saw that Mrs. Hanan's fantastic velvet hat still hung awry over a tear-stained face. *Abao*, Miss Helen was never so sad and full of woe as the old one!

"Heavens and earth, Miss Cravath," Edd was staring absently into the fluttering flame of the torch, "that was a miracle!"

"What can a miracle be?" Guimó again thought, a pucker between his eyebrows.

Then he heard Helen laugh gently, and marvelled that she could laugh there on the village street with only its single torch to drive the black-

ness back into the tree-tops or behind the steep roofs of thatch. And still his master and the lady talked earnestly to each other.

Leaving his torch in the hand of the beloved American, the brown boy ran ahead, seized the gray cow by the vine ring in her nose, and led her — the *quilez* lurching and groaning at her heels — out of the ditch into which she had strayed.

“Guimó, you’ll have to be *cochero* and steer this expedition back to Majayjay.”

So Guimó jumped up on the driver’s seat, the thong knotted to the cow’s nose-ring safe in his hands. Mrs. Hanan clambered into the mud-encrusted vehicle and dropped wearily down on the hard bench. The round-faced girl did not ride; she merely latched the little door of the *quilez* from the outside. Guimó clucked to the gray cow and the wheels started their slow creaking through the village ruts. Only a few steps behind the groaning vehicle, Helen and Edd trudged along, visiting intently, always visiting, the light from the master’s torch making the *quilez* cast a wavering tower-like shadow ahead of itself.

Guimó sat up on the *cochero*’s seat, clucking to the gray cow and thinking long thoughts.

His patient lumbering steed went scuffing through Edd’s gateway in Majayjay. The beloved American lighted the women up the stairs and into the *sala* where the lamps still burned

brightly, making opals of the tiny conch panes in the window panels. Guimó carried the travel-worn luggage up from the *quilez* and busied himself tidying the guest-room. Out in the smoky kitchen, the cook started up his fires to prepare the evening meal.

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One by one the hundred-paned window panels which had been glowing in the lamp light lost their fire and became pallidly cold-looking like the countenances of the dead. First in the *sala* the glow had flashed out, then in Edd's room, and last of all in the guest room which sheltered the ladies from far-away America. Upon the ridges of the *cordillera* the night squatted, brooding, still. Majayjay slept on and on. The house of the *Americano* was also asleep. From the roadside grass came the never-resting, throblike piping of crickets. And that made the lonely stillness only more profound.

Suddenly there came the crack of wood, like the report of a tiny pistol, where a stealthy foot had rested. Then someone stood, straight and motionless, under the arch of the *sala* door. The small flame of a white candle sent its timid beams out into the black spaces and up into the dreaming, wistful face of Guimó.

With the candle hooded by a brown hand, he began his search. The lightest sleeper could never have heard a footfall, only now and then,

perhaps, the faint distant creak of a floor timber at midnight.

All at once he halted, statue-like, as though he had forgotten the object which he was seeking. A night zephyr had come rippling through the slumbering house. Drawing itself like a spirit under the closed doors of the guest-room, it had brought to a brown-faced boy the fragrance of *ilang-ilang*.

“The *ilang-ilang*,” he whispered, drinking in a long perfume-laden breath, “which I gathered for your room, lady of America.” While his beloved American and Miss Helen had been so earnestly conversing and looking into each other’s eyes, the long *ilang-ilang* twigs had been breathlessly plucked. “Yes, the sweet odor was for you, lady. And now are you sleeping, as you said you would, like the fairies in the princess’s flower garden? . . . That must be a very beautiful garden; we have no such a one here in the islands. . . . And I would ask of you one other thing,” he continued, his lips moving without sound; “do you dream of Master Edd? . . . He loves you. Did I not behold how his eyes prayed to yours when you vanished out of the *sala*? When eyes pray like that, there is truth in my old song of ‘Love’s Happiness.’ . . . And his strong arms wished and wished to enfold you and to let you rest and be happy always. . . . Already, lady of hope, he dreads to see you bury yourself in the wilderness of Dao; and he has told you. . . .

O lady of America, are you dreaming of him? ”

The night zephyr came creeping in with its stolen burden of ambrosia. To Guimó, the hidden green flowers always breathed out the sweet odor of affection. They had grown outside Angela's window long before and had almost caressed his brown cheek the many nights while he stood on guard lest the evil spirits fly in or the howling dog of *Molang* draw too near.

Once more the flame of the candle fluttered in the shelter of the brown hand of a seeker busy at his search.

“ *Abao*, you are here—you are here! ” he whispered happily.

But the thin, plaid-covered volume answered him nothing from its hiding place on a chair bottom in the shadows of the big heavy table.

Guimó took the book gently in his hands and let himself sink down in the chair. He tipped the white candle so the hot wax dripped on the table. These drops hardening became his candlestick.

“ What book are you? ” whispered Guimó in hope and in doubt. “ What book are you that the lady of America takes such care of you and loves you so much? ”

Studiously and reverently, he turned the pages. He had seen Edd turn them lovingly as though they might have been a part of Helen's gentle, serene soul itself. The sentences his eye fell upon were very hard to understand and the words were long. There in the candle light, a perplexed frown

settled between the straining eyes. Then he sighed and the small flame trembling so near his brown cheek almost flew from its wick.

“ Oh, what book are you with your long, strange words? ” he asked wistfully. “ Do you truly tell about the Great Law and a Man, as the lady said? Can you help my master get his castles in Spain? The kind lady of America, I know, promised that you would — but can you? Can you? . . . Yet I do not see why he longs for a castle in Spain. America is so much more beautiful. . . .

“ Book, can you not tell me now what that light is that shines inside a man? . . . And the lady spoke some words about ‘ that other deeper mind of ours — so boundless — so eternal — that makes all things possible.’ I can not forget those words, book, for the lady’s gentle voice was ringing when she said them. What do they mean? *Abao*, I can not seem to understand. But you must — you must make my American understand.

“ And I wonder, did you tell the lady how to save herself to-night when the old man died who drove the cow? When the ignorant *taos* of the village thought she was a poisoner because the cholera stole in riding on the mangoes in her basket, did you help her? When the *taos* laid hold of her and would have spirited her off forever, when all the torches were smothered in the earth, did you help her? Did you put something in her gentle voice when she told them to go away and

they obeyed her, all frightened? Was it you, O book, who brought my American?

“ Ah, to-night your words seem very long and I seem very stupid,” he sighed, but the book did not heed his pleading.

“ And do you explain about the miracle? What is that? What is that word which Mr. Edd repeated so many times to Miss Helen? I must find out.”

He arose as still as a shadow and presently brought from a table in a black corner his master's dictionary of the English language. He laid it open close to the trembling flame of the white candle, and bent zealously over the crowded pages of fine print.

“ *M-m-m-m-m-me-me-mi-mi-mi-* ” he carefully went down the columns. “ Minstrel — mint — mint — minuend — minx — miocene — *miracle*, yes, miracle. Now what are you? I shall read. ‘ A wonder or wonderful thing.’ I understand that. ‘ A wonder or wonderful thing; esp. an event or effect contrary to the established constitution and course of things.’ *Abao, abao*, what is that *e-s-p* now? And I do not understand ‘ established constitution and course of things.’ You are as hard as the little book. . . . But I do know ‘ a wonder or wonderful thing.’ I know that.

“ ‘ A wonder or wonderful thing!’ Little book, do you teach the kind lady how to make miracles? And will you help her make Master

Edd happy? Make him love America and be rich and famous! ”

Guimó carefully closed the dictionary and once more opened the thin book with the plaid covers. Maybe, after all, it would answer his questions. The candle flame illumined a face with wistful pursed lips and brown eyes anxiously scanning many printed lines.

The black night never stirred in its perch on the mountains of the volcano. Majayjay slept on and on. The crickets continued busily piping their drowsy singsong. But Guimó had no ears for them. He seemed to hear music — like incense the perfume of the *ilang-ilang* came swirling to him — the music which Edd made on his violin after the supper and which made the slender, round-cheeked girl see the glory of the castles in Spain.

Then the long puzzling words pressed heavier and heavier, like little ingots, on a brown boy's eyelids. . . . Guimó was asleep, face buried in arms. Lower and lower the candle sputtered. On the boy's face a smile flickered. He was dreaming of a land of miracles and of his new-found people. O beautiful America!

CHAPTER XXIII

THE BELLS OF THE *AGONIAS*



THESE were the days when the pale *campanile* of Majayjay thundered and shivered unceasingly. Unendingly the biggest bell boomed out its thrice-repeated sepulchral note and ever the smallest bell replied with its thrice-repeated wailing clang. Thus the bells of the *agonias** ceaselessly knelled while the brown people lay dying. The cholera had laid a heavy hand on the island of Buglas.

“All ready for the coronation ceremonies, Guimó?” asked Edd Lavigne.

“The cook and Roque are about ready, sir.”

“Well, I’m impatiently waiting. This suspense is wicked.”

The panels of Edd’s dining room were open to their utmost extent. The dazzling noonday light reflected up from the white paths in the garden and thrown back from the burnished fronds of the young palms under the windows, made Guimó and his American scowl uncomfortably and showed up every smoke-stain and scratch on the old painted walls. But sunlight was a powerful

*Agonies of death.

disinfectant, as Edd had explained times without number, and sure death to cholera germs.

Roque, the little *muchacho*,* entered bearing an ample pan of boiling water. This Edd slowly poured over the long clean-scrubbed table from which it splashed to the floor and thence out through the cracks. He went to the sideboard and washed his hands in water well dosed with acid. Then he seated himself at his bare table and ordered the cook to come on with the luncheon. The first vessel the cook bore to the table was a pan of simmering water in which every dish and piece of cutlery had been rapidly boiled. By means of makeshift tongs, Edd contrived to set his table. Coffee, potatoes, the everlasting chicken, each came on in its own boiling, soot-covered pot and took its stiff place on the black, dripping table. Likewise, burning hot and pure came the toast, scorched almost to a crisp.

“ You certainly did your worst by this bread,” commented Edd to the three boys standing around, wide-eyed. “ But I don’t mind. The poor lady in Dao, though — I wonder how she manages. A fellow can’t be too careful.”

He thought bitterly of Helen’s kind, easy-going, determined way, unconscious, seemingly, of the hovering shadow. Oh, the pity of it, here in the Philippines where death ever paced at a man’s heels!

“ It is very bad, the cholera, sir,” said Guimó.

*House-boy.

“Yesterday, they say in the market, twenty-six people have die’ in Majayjay.”

“I don’t doubt it, Guimó. This island has got it bad. When I was in Dao yesterday, twenty had already been buried and it wasn’t very late yet either.” A shudder of dread gripped the beloved American.

“I am not afraid to the cholera now,” said Guimó proudly, “for you have taught me how to take care. . . . It will be very unhonorable way to die, will not it?”

“You’re not like the others, Guimó. They say it’s God’s will and wouldn’t boil their water for a *peso* a pint. Yes, and like fools they go right on eating their bananas and mangoes and then, of course, they go right on dying.”

“And they say, sir,” said Guimó somewhat shame-facedly, “that the Americans are poisoning the wells.”

“Fools that they are — damned fools!”

“I know it, sir; they are stupid, very.”

“Lord knows and I know that they need an American education all right. But of course they won’t listen to me. I’m only a crazy American. They swear it’s God’s will and whine that they don’t like the taste of boiled water.”

“*Abao*, sir, it is better to be in America. I wish I am there.”

“You’re right, son; you’re right.”

After his simple noonday meal, Edd strolled around his big house, smoking restlessly. Pres-

ently he picked up his violin and played, but he soon laid it down again. An immense serpent-like procession, carrying hundreds of lighted candles even in the glaring sun, was winding down the street past his steep-roofed house; the choir was wailing a lugubrious hymn in Latin.

“ My God, Guimó,” muttered Edd. “ These San Roque processions are enough to give a man cholera from out and out funk. That wailing — my lord! — and it’s day in and day out. The poor old saint’ll be coming down from heaven one of these days just to save himself from listening. The quiet tomb will look good to him all right. . . . Guimó, saddle my pony. I’ve got to go to Dao again to-day. I tell you it’s hell for fair with poor Helen all alone in that town, surrounded by the cholera and a lot of sapheads who think she’s a poisoner. . . . And I won’t be back, Guimó, till she comes along with me. I’ve got to get her to the capital where there are some human beings for her to depend on. I’ve got to persuade her this time. There’s nothing else to be thought of even for a minute. Oh, she ought to have been out of Dao long ago, poor kid. But God knows how I’ve tried.”

Guimó stood in a *sala* window and watched his master trot off toward the south, down the desolate sun-beaten grassy street. Of the many times he had watched his beloved American go trotting off toward the south, he no longer kept count. . . . But now when his master each time

came riding back from Dao and hastened to the violin and its wonderful music, he no longer laid the violin down despairingly — he no longer muttered: “It’s no use, Guimó, no use.”

Now when Edd came back from Dao, there was a new light in the gray eyes, a strong hope and a serene determination. He would sit down, take up his pen and cover sheets of paper with melodies and try them over and over again on his violin.

. . . . “And, Guimó, you shall go to New York with me. I am catching the rhythm. You shall see my triumph. You shall be with me,” he would say over and over and outline every detail in such lines of iridescent fire that Guimó, too, felt himself aflame at the vision. *Abao*, that vision! It must be something happier and greater than the friendly forest where old Felipe slept in the cool earth. Could it be something happier and greater than his poor lost Angela in her fairy-yellow gown? But it could never be happier and greater than finding his own people at last.

He had found his American. He had found those whom he had heard calling as he stood on the crest of the mysterious blue *cordillera*, the wisp of smoke from the volcano drifting over his head. In America, where men were so frank, friendly, distinguished, powerful, in America where Spaniards and Filipinos would not pursue him with lowering eyes, his home would be.

Many times he had coaxed Edd to start for America. There he would find his beautiful world

again; the frank American men would understand. Old Felipe had given him youth's heritage of a beautiful world but somehow it had flown out of his hands. And now he would find it again. America welcomed all men — even the homeless — and made them anew.

Twenty months, however, had slipped by since the day he had helped bear his master to Antipolo. He had spent those twenty months in a dream of the land on the other side of the Pacific — a dream which his exiled master had colored in all the scintillating hues of the glory to be won. In those slow-counted months, Guimó's sturdy hope grew from a molehill to a mountain.

“ One more year, Guimó, and I shall be ready to go to America,” came the repeated promise of his master. “ Then I shall have to get into it, to live or die, sink or swim, survive or perish, by heck! ”

Now to get from Dao to the capital a *quilez* would have to pass through Majayjay, up the coast road which ran past Edd Lavigne's big, grayish white, embowered house. The late afternoon dragged by to the knelling of the *agonias*. The early evening came and the crickets chirped in the grass under the lighted windows. The late evening came and Guimó listened thoughtfully to the sad *responsos* chanted in neighboring houses. He listened and watched. But no *quilez* came rumbling; no master came galloping. The cook

and Roque lay sound asleep on their bright *petates* spread on the dining-room floor.

At midnight Guimó girded on his sharp bolo, crept down the dark stairs, and went fleeing down the black road to the south. *Aba*, if the ever-poised hand had fallen upon his good master — if the fools who declared that Americans poisoned the wells of water had followed him like avenging shadows!

At two o'clock in the uncanny hours of the morning, Guimó came hastening into the outskirts of Dao. The watchman on guard challenged him.

"I am from Majayjay. I am seeking the American," explained Guimó.

"He entered the town this afternoon. He has not come out again. *Abao*, God is cruel to Dao. Thirty-one have died to-day and the *Americana*, poor lady, has also been stricken. We are all very sorry. Did many die in Majayjay?"

"Many, many," cried Guimó, as he hurried on into the town.

Light was pouring from the open windows of the low, rambling, weather-beaten house where Helen Cravath kept the faith. Through the cavern-like darkness beneath the house, Guimó hastened. But up the sagging stairway he went slowly, so unbroken was the silence of the bright-lighted rooms.

"Master," he said softly, when he stepped up into the dining room. A woman's hand surely had

made beautiful that ugly old sideboard and those dun-colored walls and those wry windows. Pretty curtains of *sinamay*,* neat doilies, little pictures, a few potted ferns — all these spoke of Helen.

He walked on into the *sala*. It, too, smiled invitingly in the lamplight. Still he heard no sound and saw no person, brown or white.

“ Master,” he called softly.

Possessed by a deep dread, the brown-cheeked boy walked slowly toward the farther end of the long *sala*. Near this farther end a pair of doors stood open.

In front of these doors, he stopped dead. An expression, half-pity, half-horror, convulsed his face. At first all that he saw on the heavy four-poster, beneath the white canopy, was the glassy staring of Helen’s eyes — eyes that did not move. Then he saw his master not far away, half-prostrate over the littered table, face buried in arms, and motionless.

“ *Abao*, master,” called Guimó, “ I was afraid of the fools who think you to be a poisoner.”

Dazed, Edd lifted his face and ran his fingers through his black hair. Guimó saw that his master’s face was flushed, and the gray eyes a little dull.

“ Ah, Guimó, you are the right kind of a friend. . . . What ever made you come to Dao? ” Edd spoke with just a trace of thickness.

“ I was afraid, sir, of those — ”

*Cloth made of pineapple fibre and silk.

“ Oh, my God, Guimó, you won't run away and leave me now that you're needed, will you? Every servant ran when poor Helen — when poor Helen — My God, they left her alone. . . . But I got here.”

“ *Abao*, sir, I will not run away.”

“ I knew it. . . . And she's dead — dead, do you hear? The chlorodyne and the whiskey I gave her didn't help. . . . Oh, I tell you, she had her courage to stick it out in this hell of a place. . . . Why couldn't her Great Law and her faith help her here? They deserted her, too; they deserted her. . . . Better take a couple heavy swigs of this whiskey, Guimó. It helps — kill the germs. . . . Oh, Guimó, think of it — she's gone, gone.”

The next afternoon, Guimó and Edd Lavigne crept slowly up the coast road from Dao. Silently they entered Majayjay. As they crossed the dreary, cogon-covered plaza, they came face to face with another endless candle-lighted San Roque procession; as ever, the choir was wailing a lugubrious Latin hymn. Guimó gently took the pony's bridle and led the little fellow to one side for Edd's gray eyes had already forgotten the long procession and the jolting brocaded images. . . . Edd was thinking of how they had carried Helen to the jungle-like cemetery on a green bamboo bier, of how they had dug a grave in the crowded honey-combed enclosure and had buried her hastily.

Up in his own dusky *sala*, Edd wandered restlessly back and forth. Lovingly he paused and looked at his violin. Then he took it and locked it up in his steamer trunk.

“ Oh, Guimó, it’s no use — no use! ”

Edd next strode to his table and picked up the sheets of music he had been working on for months. Taking them strongly in his hands, he tore them in two from top to bottom and hopelessly dropped them out of the window. Aching, Guimó turned away when he saw the expression in his master’s eyes.

“ God, Guimó, how can I ever get back my faith again! . . . I can’t go on with my work.”

When the black crepe of the night enfolded Majayjay again, Guimó stole down the dark stairs and out into the garden beneath his master’s window. Carefully, tenderly, he gathered up the pathetically torn sheets of music scattered on the ground, smuggled them upstairs, and hid them in his own little bundle of possessions.

THE TASK OF FORGETTING



HOLE-HEARTEDLY, Edd Lavigne went to pieces. It is even a little more terrible for a man to lose his new-born faith than to lose the dearest friend that he knows. Edd had lost both and Guimó could not comfort him. Guimó's heart often ached to witness the down-grinding changes the swift weeks and months brought about.

Abao, the march of the bottles of brown fiery whiskey from the Chinese store to his master's bureau! Roque, the little *muchacho*, had planted them, as they were emptied, neck downward along the main path through the little garden. He took much pride in his border, for borders of bottles bottom-up distinguished many an old *hacienda* garden. . . . However much Edd drank, he kept a fairly clear head and his old-time kindness. There was much, very much of pathos in his plight. It is a tremendous task for a man to forget the mountain-strong foundations of his dreams. Edd's unhappy eyes always told how he failed.

Then Corazon — the pretty market girl who had once been in the custom of dancing the mountain dances with Guimó up in Edd's *sala* — Corazon had come into his master's life. That was the next move in the terrific game of forgetting.

"Ah, sir, it is very soon time for us to go to America," Guimó timidly reminded his master one night.

"America? America? I can't go back there now, Guimó."

"You must, master; you must. America, I think, wants you."

"It's no use, Guimó; no use at all."

"*Abao*, sir, if you — why do not you ever play your violin?"

"It makes me remember, son. That's why."

"I feel very pity, sir, to — to —"

"To see me go to hell. Well, I guess that's where I belong."

"No — no! Think of your America — your America."

"I'm afraid to. . . . Why is Corazon so slow in coming?"

"I do not know, sir. . . . *Abao*, I am very sorry."

"Oh, devil take it, what's the use? There's more music when you drop out of the world here — than there."

Guimó had had some chances to watch other

good Americans drop out of the world to the tune of the island music. Well, his beloved American could not — must not go that way. Yes, it would be hard to turn back the march of the bottles, but Corazon — Corazon must come no more. She would drag the master down into the earth as the native women always did.

The following night Guimó left his master's house and took his post of waiting underneath a paulahan tree. This tree Corazon must pass when she returned from the market to her little thatched house. Over in the market the torches and the fluttering lights moved and twisted, rose and fell and the noisy clamor of the bargainners buzzed through the quiet streets and over the house-tops. Some laughed and drank *tuba*; others quarreled. In their midst Corazon vended her shrimps and mussels and clean blue crabs.

The arm-long pinnate leaves of the paulahan tree hung heavily from the high boughs above Guimó's head. Among these boughs flitted hundreds of large fireflies, for of all the trees in Majayjay they like the paulahan best.

The buzzing from the market place grew softer. The market women and the *tienda* keepers were dispersing. Torches and smoky lamps were winding this way and that along the black streets of the town.

Guimó saw a slender girlish figure approaching. The little tin *quinque* in her hand lighted

up the pretty clear-brown face and the under side of the great tray balanced on her neatly-coiled hair.

“ Good night, Corazon,” said Guimó. “ I want to beg you for something.”

“ *Abao*, Guimó, what can that be? Do you want me to come to Mr. Edd’s house to-night and dance with you? ”

“ Not quite that, Corazon. You are a very pretty girl, aren’t you? You have your mouth full of pearls and your eyes full of light.”

“ Now you flatter me, you rascal.” Her face lighted up in a childish smile.

“ Listen, Corazon. Do not come to the American’s house again. That is what I beg you.”

“ Why not? ” she demanded airily. “ I am not your sweetheart and never will be.”

“ Do not come again. My American will never return to his own people.”

“ But the American is my friend. I am very proud and happy. No other girls in Majayjay have such luck as I, Guimó.”

“ Do you want to keep him forever away from his own land? You have heard what happened to some Americans.”

“ Yes, I do want to keep him. He is very fond of me and of me alone.”

“ You want to spoil my American’s life.”

“ I do not spoil his life, Guimó.”

“ You will see. You will see. As the Americans say, he is missing too many boats.”

“ I am happy; so is he. You had better save your foolish words.”

“ I wish you would do this for me.” Guimó’s strong hand was touching her brown wrist.

“ Why should I do it for you? You are a meddler,” she cried, freeing her hand.

“ I can give you much money, for I know where money is buried up on the side of the volcano,” said Guimó caressingly.

“ *Aba*, I have enough money. Why should I be rich? I have everything that I need.”

“ I can give you enough money, Corazon, to set you up in a nice big *tienda*.”

“ *Aba*,” scowled Corazon. “ I don’t want a *tienda*. It would be too much work. I like my tray better.”

“ Corazon, please do this for my master.”

“ No, sir! . . . What would I say to Meest’r Edd? ”

“ You are not his slave.”

“ But I would come if he bade me.”

“ Then you must go to some other town or to the big city across the channel.”

“ No, no, devil that you are! ”

“ What would coax you to go away from Majayjay? Tell me.”

“ I will not leave my home. I am happy here. I will never go.”

“ You must go, Corazon. That is what I say.”

“ Well, I am not your slave either. And may the thunder blast you! ”

"You must go. Then my master will awaken. He will go back to America. America wants him."

"Abao, you are a crazy Guimó."

"I tell you you must never see the American again."

Corazon laughed in his face and swung her *quinque* aimlessly.

"Shall I tell you, eyes full of light, how I saw Tio Felipe die without any sickness? Shall I tell you how he said he would die at midnight and how he lay down and slept and never woke up?" asked Guimó ominously.

"No, no; do not tell me," she pleaded, nervously following with timid eyes the weavings of her smoky *quinque*.

"I will tell you. And shall I tell you the hour when you shall lie down and quietly fall asleep without awakening?"

"How dare you, Guimó? . . . Oh, no, no, do not tell me. I will not listen. I'll press my fingers into my ears."

Corazon grasped the long tray on her head and ran swiftly down the street away from the paul-ahan tree. Guimó stood watching her retreating figure. Above his head the big fireflies circled in their slow, stately fashion. He took a cigarette out of his *camisa* pocket and lighted it. Then he walked back to his master's house very slowly, very deep in his earnest thoughts.

He entered the house by way of the little garden

and trudged wearily up the wide steps. He passed through the cheerless dining-room into the big lighted *sala*.

There he saw his master sitting in the low, broad-armed rocker and Corazon kneeling at his feet, her brown arms thrown entreatingly around his knees. Near her, on the polished floor lay her big tray and the sputtering *quinque*. Edd was stroking her neatly-coiled hair caressingly.

"Oh, here you are," muttered Edd when he looked up and saw Guimó. "Stop that trembling, Corazon. He can't hurt you. He is only fooling you."

"I do not like him; I hate him," whimpered Corazon.

"Guimó," demanded Edd angrily, "what do you mean by your talk to this poor little girl? I wish I knew what I ought to do with you. You're not safe to have around."

"Abao, master, you know. You know I am very sad to see you go like the other Americans. You know I want you to go to America and have rich and famous. I, also, want to go to that great country."

"What in hell is it to you?" asked Edd, firing up. Guimó saw that the gray eyes were blood-shot. "You forget I'm an American and I won't have any accursed goo-goo trying to tell me what I'm to do."

"I was only wishing for you, sir," answered Guimó, his friendly eyes deeply puzzled.

“Wishing for me? Well, you needn’t bother yourself. I always tried to make myself believe that you were a different sort of boy but my eyes are open at last. You’re like all the rest of your heathen tribe, working for your own interest and jealous of every woman on your God-forsaken island. I might have known it. . . . What right have you to say anything to Corazon anyway? She’s a quiet little girl; she isn’t cracking her head all the time about my carting her off to America.”

“I wanted her to go away, sir,” replied Guimó quietly, “for you want to go to your home in America. Your woman should be a woman of your own people.” Guimó’s eyes pleaded wishfully.

“Shut up, will you? I’ll go when I am good and ready,” asserted Edd harshly.

“You do not understand, sir. . . . I have always been your friend, Mr. Edd, have not I?”

“A treacherous one, I know now from the way you’ve been threatening poor Corazon. Oh, I heard long before I came here that the people were always treacherous—polite and all that, you know, but treacherous. I believe it now all right.”

“*Abao*, sir,” said Guimó sadly. “You know my father was a white man and a good man. I am more like to him.”

“How so? God knows you half-castes inherit all the yellow streaks from both sides. You’re

neither flesh nor fowl nor good red herring. I can see that now."

"Oh, Mr. Edd," begged Guimó dismally, "will not you send this Corazon away? Then you will not say those words. Your eyes will be opened and you will remember Miss Helen who —"

"Keep still, keep still, you fool," shouted Edd Lavigne, his bloodshot eyes blazing. "You're the one I'm going to send away. . . . Do you hear that? I'm sending you away. Get off with you. Go on back to your own tribe. Go on back where you won't be jealous of your pretty women."

"Master," said Guimó, his brown skin paling pitiably.

"Out with you, you ungrateful nigger. You're like all the rest. You don't know what gratitude is."

"Gratitude," repeated Guimó with dignity. "I did not know —"

"Do you hear me? Get out!"

"Corazon," said Guimó inexorably, "three days hence at this very hour," — Corazon moaned in her terror — "if you are not far away from Majayjay —"

"You devil," Edd blurted out. He shook himself free from Corazon's trembling hands and strode threateningly toward Guimó. "You savage!"

"Master, I go," acquiesced Guimó quietly. Within himself he endured the aching. The light

in the friendly shining eyes dulled, for he was looking upon a crucifixion. Again there was darkness over all the land and the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

In the little back room, he gathered his few possessions together in a convenient bundle. At the bottom of this bundle nestled the torn sheets of Edd's music. Then there was the plaid-covered book which he had brought back with him from Helen's house in Dao. Maybe his master would like that book which Helen had kept so constantly beside her. Maybe his master would read it and learn again.

Guimó went dreamingly to the *sala* entrance and tapped on the doorpost. Edd was pacing unhappily back and forth.

"Mr. Edd," said Guimó beseechingly, "here is Miss Helen's book for you."

"Keep the thing, Guimó. It's a pack of lies," he muttered and shut the door in the boy's sad face.

As Guimó with his little bundle in his hand tramped along the dark, silent streets, he again and again asked mournfully: "Why does my American not understand? . . . Oh, well, I suppose I am only a savage."

CHAPTER XXV

THEY SAIL AWAY



ILLY Veach gave his waving red hair a hasty backward dab as he stood in front of the niggardly mirror. He had long before hardened himself to the undulating lines in the texture of the glass — Billy Veach was only the American teacher in Kalakan, which lay a round ten miles northeast of Majayjay. In the Philippines, however, ten miles is but a neighborly jaunt. Consequently, Billy and Edd Lavigne had been chums for a little over a year.

Billy now shook a wasteful amount of powder into his broad palm and slapped it energetically on his cheeks.

“ Jiminy, don’t I get awfully burned up, though? Maybe I don’t put ye ancient flannel petticoat to scorn! How about it, Guimó? ”

“ I do not understand ‘ ye ancient flannel petticoat,’ Mr. Veach. ”

“ May you never, Bill. Didn’t know your name was Bill, did you? It is. Guillermo — William; Guimó — Bill. It’s a fine name. I’ve long been attached to it. ”

Guimó, from his perch on the edge of Billy's bed, smiled interestedly. Billy picked up his notchy old pipe, ripped up a cigarette and filled the comfortable bowl with the fine-cut tobacco.

"It's too bad, Guimó," reflected Billy, taking an initial puff, "that you've had a falling-out with Edd. He'll miss you all right. He always said you were one native in a million. But what can you expect of a man going to the devil the way he does? This country plays the deuce with too darned many."

"Can not you make him to go back to America, Mr. Veach? . . . Yes, that is my plot. You are his companion whenever he goes to the big city on a vacation."

"Blame it, I wish I could. It's poor Edd's only salvation."

"Take him with you when you go to America. Your servant says that you go in April."

"Yes, I'm shaking the dust in April. Got to go back and get me a frau. But we're coming back again. She can teach and I can teach; we can save some money and get a start in life. That's one allurement about the P. I.'s."

"Can not you beg Mr. Lavigne to go with you, sir? "

"Oh, I'll try. Doubt if I can. He's missing boats fast now." Billy blew a cloud of smoke halfway across his sleeping quarters.

"America wants him, Mr. Veach. He can

write very beautiful music. He can have rich and famous."

"What! Does he write music? He kept it mighty secret. I knew he could play to beat the band and that's all I did know."

"*Abao*, he writes the music, too."

"He won't do much, Guimó, letting himself slide as he is now."

"That is a very pity, sir. Can not you take him to America?"

"Gosh, you seem mighty anxious to get him out of the country." The rank old pipe pulled a wry face on Billy.

"I am, sir. . . . I love him. And also I want to go to America, too, for I am an American now."

"Ha, that's it. You want to go to America."

"I do, sir. He will not be angry to me when he is in New York. He will be sorry and be my friend again. That is what I think, Mr. Veach. You can take him to America."

"Well, I'll try. I hate to see him, poor chap, go straight to the dogs. He'd better be in a safe country. It takes a man of iron nerve, I tell you, to make such a glaring fool of himself back in the good old U. S. A. But here — here any blamed duck can do it without long years of practice." Billy dumped his pipe into a brass tray which already spilled its heaped-up ashy contents out on the helter-skelter table. "Guimó, I never

empty this tray till it's full. Life is too short." He ripped up another cigarette and packed the black bowl, lighted up and lost himself in thought.

"So you think you want to go to America, Guimó?" he asked after a long pause.

"I must go, sir. It is a wonderful country. I will make my home there always. I think the Americans are my people." Guimó's friendly eyes shone wistfully.

"It sure is a wonderful country, Guimó, if you've got the plentiful spondulix, namely, lots of money, as we say it in English. You'll be all right if you're rich. It's the blamedest country in the world to be poor in."

"It's the only country I have now," replied Guimó, sighing.

"If you have lots of money, you'll have lots of friends in America. If you haven't, you won't have the good times you have here among your own people."

"These are not my people, Mr. Veach. I tell you, sir, I have learned that."

"Take my word for it, Guimó, the Americans won't be your own people either unless you can make good — unless you can plank down the proof of it in cold cash. Pshaw, if you're poor or a failure, they'll send a charity worker around to give you their best regards."

"I will be all right. I will live in the very fine house of Mr. Lavigne when he is rich and famous. He will be my friend. I shall then be happy."

“ Guimó, I wouldn't think of going to America, if I were in your place. That's my honest advice.”

“ But, sir, I will be with my master and he will — he will have rich and famous.”

“ There's more than that, Guimó.”

“ Does not America welcome all men, as my master said? ”

Billy smacked on his old pipe for some time.

“ Yes, boy, she welcomes all those of the white-skinned nations. Do you see? I might as well put you wise.”

“ *Abao*, I am too brown! ”

“ It's a handsome brown, Guimó, but just the same you wouldn't like it in America. People there would sort of recoil just because of that brownness. That is no way for friends to act. I guess you know how it is with the few Americans out here, don't you, Guimó? ”

“ *Abao*, Mr. Veach, is it that way in America, too? ”

“ It is, Guimó. So many of the real niggers there. That's what causes the strong feeling. I'm afraid you wouldn't enjoy yourself.”

Guimó sighed deeply. His own people — his home! Oh, where would he ever find them? If his master would only go to America, then he would have a friend and a people. He would ask for no more than his master, his American.

Late on a Sunday night a fortnight later, Billy Veach came riding back from Majayjay. Guimó was waiting, and watching the tired gait of the

roan pony as the little steed plowed through the moonlight toward Billy's roomy *nipa* house.

A stately *colis maloco* tree overshadowed the *nipa* house. In the flood of the tropical moonlight, the golden tips of the long, green-leaved branches seemed to palpitate with a clear yellow light. Beves of young men and maidens strolled and chatted on the transfigured streets. From two or three hidden thatches came the sound of happy fingers dancing over guitar strings. On a distant corner a company of children shouted excitedly while they kicked their bouncing ball of woven rattan up into the silver-tinged air.

Guimó met Billy as he rode slowly through the bamboo gate and slid from the saddle under the tree where the big green oranges hung.

"Jiminy, that's a dickens of a ride up from Majayjay."

"How is Mr. Edd, sir?" asked Guimó anxiously.

"Pretty fair for him. Swore like a trooper when I mentioned America, but that doesn't discourage me. It only wakes me up."

"Did he say anything about — about me, Mr. Veach?"

"I guess he feels bad about you, Guimó, right down in his heart. But he can't forgive you for scaring Corazon away."

"She did go away!"

"Yes; he can't find hide nor hair of her."

"I am glad of that, are not you, Mr. Veach?"

“Mighty good thing for poor Edd all right.”

For three months, Billy Veach traveled often to Majayjay to coax Edd to go back to the States with him in April and face the world like a man. But every time Billy came riding back at a snail's pace, tired, discouraged, his red hair wildly ruffled. Guimó waited patiently and drank in every word he heard concerning his master. Day after day, he dreamed of the resurrection of the old friendship.

Then, on an evening when the velvety sky could scarcely find hanging space for the thousands of gently glowing stars, Billy came back with the great news.

“By jiminy, Guimó,” he explained hurriedly, while he jingled his boot in the roan's stirrup, “Edd is going to the States with me. In fact, he's got to. Everybody knows it. The government gets down on such capers as Edd's. Old Stelton is going to let him finish his year out—it's only another month or so. Then he's got to go to the States or resign. It's the best thing that ever happened to the boy.”

“*Abao*, I am very glad—very glad. Now he will have rich and famous.”

“It's up to him, Guimó.”

“And he will not be angry to me when he is in America and he will send for me and I shall go to America, too.” Guimó's friendly eyes were shining and his voice unsteady from happiness as he dried the roan pony's sweaty back and listened

to the pony's greedy munching of two *gantas** of *palay*.

"Now I don't want to disappoint you, Guimó, but it's better to learn the truth now than later. False hopes play the deuce. Don't count too much on poor Edd. He's got the notion into his head that you're the one who squealed and sent the old man after him. I can't drive the notion out of him with hammers and tongs. He wouldn't believe me when I told him I did it just to save his precious neck. But it's the truth. I had to. I didn't want to hear of his being as dead as a doornail when my frau and I get back here. . . . It's too bad, Guimó."

"He does not understand, sir," murmured Guimó wearily. Something within him was tottering, sinking.

"That's the hell of it, Guimó. But you see he's not himself yet either. One rampage after another take their reckoning from the best of men."

"Maybe he will feel very pity some day and — and be my friend again." Guimó's voice was without confidence.

"I do hope so, Guimó," declared Billy feelingly.

The six weeks which followed flew by like the wind when the monsoon blows from the north. "There's no rest for the wicked," exclaimed Billy, never pausing in his red-headed flight from

*Three quarts.

one job to another. He and Guimó stuffed his steamer trunk, a pair of bamboo *tampipis* and a box from the Chinese store; partly with clothes, mostly with island plunder in the seizing of which Billy had been the cheerful plundered one beyond cavil. For a song he bargained off crockery, linen, bedding, pots, pans, kettles to his brown neighbors in Kalakan. He sold the roan pony and made six-fifty by the deal.

In fact, he had to borrow a fiery stallion from the *presidente* of Kalakan for his last hurried run down to Majayjay. He came flying back that same afternoon with the news that Edd Lavigne was all ready for the long trip to America.

“And would you believe it, Guimó? The blamest change has come over the cuss. He swears he hasn’t drunk a drop for twenty-seven days. I hardly knew him. Hope he’s on the upgrade for good.”

Two days later, while the high bamboo palings around Billy’s yard were still damp and cool with the dew — while the morning sun just above the crest of the mysterious blue *cordillera* lighted up the golden tips of the stately *colis maloco* tree — Billy Beach said good-bye to his brown neighbors gathered to wish him Godspeed to America, stepped into the *quilez* where Guimó awaited him, and was off for Lisay where the little brown steamer came twice each week.

Leaning back on the *quilez*’s hard bench, Billy

threw off his broad-brimmed felt hat, wiped the perspiration from his brow and brushed back the waving red hair.

“ Jiminy! The next time I break up my happy home and start for America — God willing — I’ll have a frau. And fraus are good at packing and all such didoes. But, by heck, I’ll warn her six months in advance. . . . Glad you came along, Guimó. Like the company up to Lisay. I’ll thrill with pride if you’ll only wave your tear-drenched handkerchief at me from the shore.”

The *quilez* jolted along roads hardened by the beating of the dry season’s relentless sun. It wallowed across shallow streams and rode across deep rivers on tediously creeping *balsas*.* Women and children sped to the crooked windows of their weather-beaten palm-thatched houses and watched the vehicle draw out of sight. In their diminutive *tiendas*, *tao* women sat chewing the blood-red *buyo* and sorting the white hemp fibers which hung like great long heads of hair down before them. Deftly they coiled it, according to the degree of fineness, in terra-cotta pots. The sound of the clacking looms floated out between the crevices in bamboo screens.

The *quilez* went jolting past red-skirted women with piled trays balanced on their heads, past sweating *cargadores* — their buckets of foaming *tuba* bobbing at the ends of yoke-like *tuang-tuangs*.

*Ferries.

Once it met a dark native toiling along, a monitor lizard as long as himself slung over his back. Near Lisay it overtook two natives carrying a piercingly squealing pig, the pig hanging by its tightly bound feet on a long pole.

The rough road twisted past mangrove swamps, past gray-trunked, emerald-crowned cocoanut groves, along bamboo-shaded lanes which cried out unchangingly: “*Capitan Bamba Suñgayan! — Capitan Bamba Suñgayan!*”

When the *quilez* was drawing into the little port of Lisay, Guimó unwrapped a package bound in a piece of old *sinamay*.

“Mr. Veach,” he explained confidently, “here is Mr. Edd’s music — all these sheets he tore into two pieces and threw out of the window. It will be easy to fit them together again. *Abao*, the music is very beautiful, sir. I have heard it.”

“You ought to know, Guimó. All you people are born musicians. I’ll take your word for it. My repertoire consists, alas, of ‘Peter, Peter’ played in three keys, and that alone.”

“And, sir,” asked Guimó eagerly, “you will please give to Mr. Edd these pieces. They will make him to be rich and famous. Give them to him when you are sailing into the beautiful New York. He will not throw them away then.”

“I will, Guimó. . . . Say, you are a good kid. . . . You make me wish I had the money to take you along with me. . . . Guimó, I’ll tell you what I’ll do. . . . I’ll

make him take you back. He will send you a letter and tell you all about it."

"Will he ask me to come to the beautiful America, sir?"

"Honestly, Guimó, I wouldn't come to America."

"Abao, Mr. Veach."

The *quilez* toiled up the sandy street to the little restaurant at the end of the frail creaking pier. Billy tucked the torn sheets of music into his suitcase. The stout proprietor hastened out, the big mole above his left eyebrow moving up and down deprecatingly.

"Come in, sir, come in. The dinner will soon be served."

Billy Veach and Guimó crawled out of the *quilez*. A black-haired, gray-eyed white man strode to the door of the restaurant. It was the beloved American. Into his eyes, Guimó's friendly shining eyes looked straight and appealingly.

Edd Lavigne frowned, then turned on his heel and betook himself carelessly off into the shadows of the faded thatch.

Guimó took Billy Veach's broad hand. "Good-bye, Mr. Veach. I wish to you a happy journey."

"Don't hurry away, Guimó."

"I must, sir."

"Good-bye then, Guimó. Take good care of yourself."

Guimó doffed his hat politely and wandered off down the crowded, bustling sandy street.

The hollow, sea-born blast of the little brown steamer's whistle echoed through the *kalubihan* of Lisay. The engines throbbed complainingly; the steamer shoved ponderously away from the bustling creaky pier. Far down the dazzling beach, beside the gray base of an aged palm, Guimó sat huddled, his strong brown hands clasped around his knees. Wistfully he watched his Americans sail away. The mild breakers rushed softly, hissingly from the green shore water up over the shell-strewn beach. The wind from wide, wide waters stirred the languorous drooping fronds of the aged palm. Straining, aching, his brown eyes followed the little brown steamer. By and by he could no longer see the tattered rolling pennant of black smoke behind the tiny flocking islets.

CHAPTER XXVI

A - DREAMING



FOR three days, Guimó had been trudging south through the *cordillera's* towering forest. Now the massive root of a mighty ipil tree furnished him its broad top for a bench. He was leaning forward, elbows on knees, gripping in his strong brown hands a little plaid-covered book. His lips moved slowly; the scowl between his earnest eyes deepened. With all his might he strove to see into the laborious words which had once upon a time made Helen love the lonely town of Dao. But the words were long and hard.

Above his head, the lofty tree-tops caught the April sun. Many a time in the old days he had seen these same tree-tops clutch at the light-riven clouds which hurried past, hurling to the right and the left their thunder and lightning.

"Talar-r-r-rik!" came the weird, terrifying cry of the toucan. Thus it had come many years before when old Felipe with the far-seeing light in his eyes had been beside him to guard him.

"Talar-r-r-rik!"

Deafly Guimó pored over the little book.

Tilting its heavy red beak, the toucan peered at him out of big, deep-lashed eyes. Then it spread its wings and flew away.

“*Abao*, book, I cannot understand you,” muttered Guimó wearily. “Oh, I wish you would make yourself clear to me!”

The little book dropped to the ground. Guimó’s friendly eyes stared long into the sinking fire.

Then he arose from the massive root of the mighty ipil tree. His troubled face looked courageously upward and the shadows caught up his intense words:

“America, I will go to you. I can — I will, O beautiful home!”

He stooped and picked up his load.

“I will go to you!” He brought his arms down determinedly. The capacious basin — blue enamel without, white within, and but fresh from the Chinese shop — the capacious basin in his hand boomed sonorously like the big bell in Majayjay’s campanile. The sound of its reverberation echoed strangely through the forest.

Guimó pressed on to the south. All alone he traveled, a strong, lithe boy with friendly eyes in which the clouds too often swept over the shining. All alone he trudged on, his capacious basin in one hand, his blowgun and heavy bag of rice in the other. Hemp-soled *alpargatas* sandaled his feet; baggy linen-colored pantaloons and a transparent *camisa* of honey-hued *abaca** garmented

*Hemp thread.

him; over his black hair and clear-brown forehead a white kerchief was snugly drawn and knotted behind. A bolo swung on his hip.

Three days before, up on the side of the great volcano, he had found the tree-grown spot where, years gone by, the little cluster of toadstool houses had nestled. Here the jungle now flourished. He found the two trees between which a part of old Felipe's money still lay buried. But he had not paused to dig it up. It would be cumbersome to carry into the heart of the *cordillera* — to the cataract and the brook where the golden carabao came out at night to drink. Besides, it would be so poor and little when seen by the side of the rich gold in the gravel of the brook. *Abao*, he would gather many pounds of the shining gold.

In a dog-eared "History of the United States," back in Billy Veach's *sala*, he had found a picture of the miners of '49 panning gold in California. In a footnote on the same page, he had read of the fortunes. Many and many a day he had bent over this wood-cut and footnote. Long he had thought it over. He, too, would seek the precious gold. He had kept his promise to old Felipe but now — now his happiness was at stake. He would gather his fortune of gold together and go to America and be in the midst of his own people. Then they would be his people and love him, as Billy had said. He must have the gold, for his master would never send for him. The master did

not understand the heart of his lover. His master did not understand.

Guimó trudged on. It seemed as if he could see the faded old eyes of Tio Felipe beneath the great *soroc*.

“ We are to-night in the country where strangers are not welcome,” he confided to his timid little fire that evening. Often he talked aloud to his fire, or to his thoughts, or to the giant trees which seemed to touch the sky, for he was all alone pressing on into the wild heart of the *cordillera*.

Off in the velvet black shadows, *bukao*, the owl cried mournfully: “ Oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo! ” But Guimó did not remember to ask him hard questions.

In the cold dawn the lusty crowing of the wild cocks shrilled from afar.

That day he arrived again at the tinkling torrent and left a handful of fat snails on a flat rock in plain sight.

“ For you, *Oko*,” he murmured and pressed on.

At great heights above his head the little gray macaques slipped dizzily along from branch to branch until they spied him. Then with a multitude of shrieks they tore away crashingly through twigs and sun-bathed leaves. Now a flock of green parrakeets flew clumsily away from his path.

The next morning his ears caught the sound of a faint, far-away roar.

“ The cataract! ” he cried thrillingly.

By the hour when the sun stood in the zenith,

Guimó was bending over the brink of the frothing pool and letting the spray from the glimmering water ribbon blow into his sober brown face.

“ Here I can feel the beating of the *cordillera's* heart,” he mused. He drew his *mutia*, his charm, out of his pocket. “ Oh, dead *mutia*, here I leave you! You did not give me back my American! ” And he tossed the pearl into the thundering frothy pool.

“ My American, *abao*, what will America be without him? . . . Oh, why do I dream of going there? The red-haired one said I would not be happy there. . . . Tio Felipe, why did you say that the shining gold was naught but a poison? ”

Guimó followed the bubbling, singing stream as it sped on, driven forever by the pool's frothing water. Deep in thought, he followed the singing stream.

“ *Abao!* ”

At his feet some tiny flakes of gold glittered in the gravel. But where had the nuggets hidden, such nuggets as he had bought Angela's deer with? Could another man have found the place where the golden carabao came out to drink? No, not that. The singing brook must have swept the heavy nuggets on.

He would follow this mischievous brook. Many minutes, he tramped on, his eyes on the limpid, swirling water.

All at once, he came upon a little hut without

walls. It looked quite new. It had a floor which sat as high as Guimó's shoulders above the ground. It had a roof of thick-laid grass which almost touched the floor. It was new and yet without sign of a dweller, a bare little hut without token of life.

"Well," thought Guimó, "I had best stay here till the owner comes, for the shelter is good. He and I can be friends. . . . He, too, must be seeking the nuggets."

With a clatter, Guimó flung his basin and blow-gun and bag of rice on the floor of the hut. A string of crows whirred up from a thicket an arrow's flight distant.

"*Wok-woks*, for whom are you watching?" called Guimó, his brown eyes clouded.

"*Wok-wok-wok*," scolded the crows as they flew to a towering tree across the ravine. There they perched and curiously watched the stranger.

A circle of blackened stones and charred embers on the ground underneath the bamboo floor showed where the unseen owner had built his fires; so here Guimó also lighted his fire and prepared his food.

The mighty forest was impenetrably black. The brook tinkled on, bubbling and singing without rest. Cross-legged, Guimó sat by the fire, the plaid-covered book held very close to the flames.

"Little book," he murmured, "will I truly find my people in America?"

But the little book did not answer him. It was

too full of big words which could not be understood.

Guimó brooded long by the side of the fire. Then he clambered up into the hut, stretched himself out on the woven floor—which was but a sieve for all the smoke to drift through—and fell asleep, listening to the tiny insects piping: “*Hulat—Lacat.* . . . Oh, wait—Make haste.”

He slept, his brown hand gently touching the handle of his bolo. And as he slept, a shadow of a smile fell athwart the full, clear-cut lips. The smoke from the flickering fire curled waveringly, fantastically up through the wide cracks and around him. The shadowy smile lingered on his lips. He was dreaming of the far, far, place which would be home.

The *bukao*, the owl, repeated its trembling, mournful cry. The cold white moon sailed up over the dim blue mountain-peaks. No less silently did the naked brown mountaineers creep down along the singing brook to the dreaming Guimó.

“Well has the rising smoke warned us of another stranger in our mountains,” whispered one, peering through distant leaves at the fire-lit hut.

“He, too, must die.”

“Why do they not remain with their own people?”

“This time *I* will put the leaves on the fire.”

“Yes. . . . Be cautious. . . . No scream of our enemy must cast its spell of death

over us in these black hours. Soon he will be stupified beyond chance of awakening. Then we can free ourselves of him.”

A mountaineer crept silently up to the little flickering fire. From a pouch, he drew handfuls of dried narcotic leaves and sprinkled them on the coals. Thicker and thicker the smoke arose and whirled around the recumbent figure of a weary boy. Guimó slept on. The shadowy smile still lingered on his lips.

GLOSSARY

- aba** (ah-bah'). Oh! Used when feeling of unusual depth seeks expression.
- abaca** (ah-bah-kah'). Thread of hemp.
- abao** (ah-bough'). Oh! An exclamation of somewhat less force than *aba*.
- agonias** (ah-go-nee'-ahs). The agonies of death.
- alpargatas** (ahl-pahr-gah'-tahs). Rough cloth shoes with soles of hemp cord.
- ambut** (ahm-but' — *u* as in *full*). I don't know.
- asuangs** (ah-swahngs'). Malicious witch-like ghosts.
- baile** (by'-ly). A ball or dance.
- baleti** (bah-lee'-ty). A parasitic tree which eventually implants itself in the soil. With its many intertwining trunks, it resembles the well-known banyan of India.
- balsas** (bahl'-sahs). Ferries, usually of bamboo.
- banag** (bah'-nahg). Snail.
- banayan** (bah-nigh'-ahn). A vine with edible roots.
- banca** (bahn'-kah). A canoe, hollowed out of a log and balanced by means of outriggers.
- bancero** (bahn-kair'-o). The man who paddles the canoe.
- banduria** (bahn-doo-ree'-ah). A musical instrument similar to a guitar.
- barong** (bah-rohng'). A weapon resembling a short sword.
- baua** (bow'-ah). A spirit bird making a noise like a common hen and endowed with the power of transmuting itself into any form.

- bayones** (by-oh'-nees). Bags of woven palm leaf, in which sugar is shipped.
- bolo** (boh'-loh). The commonest weapon and implement of all work in the Philippines. A heavy knife from one to two feet long.
- borot** (boh'-roht). A vine with edible roots.
- bosque** (bohs'-ky). Wilderness.
- bote** (boh'-ty). Jolly-boat.
- buenas tardes** (boo-ain'-es tar'-dees). Good evening.
- bukao** (boo-kow'). Owl.
- buyo** (boo'-yoh). The common chewing mixture of the Philippines. The ingredients are tobacco, lime, betel leaf, and the nut of the areca palm.
- caingin** (kah-in-gin' — *g* as in *begin*). Little farm plots where the forest has been recently cleared.
- calesa** (kah-lay'-sah). A low two-wheeled carriage.
- camisa** (kah-mee'-sah). The collarless shirt-like jacket of the men; also the loose transparent bell-sleeved waist of the women.
- campilan** (kahn-pee'-lahn). A two-handed sword used by the Moros.
- capataz** (kah-pah-tahs'). Foreman.
- Capitan Bamba Suñgayan** (Kah-pee-tahn' Bahm'-bah Soong-eye'-ahn). Captain Bamba of the Horns.
- carabao** (car'-ah-bough'). Water buffalo.
- cargador** (car'-gah-door'). Porter.
- cariñoso** (car-in-yo'-so). Literally, "affectionate"; a native dance.
- cascos** (kahs'-kos). Small native canal boats.
- chinelas** (she-nay'-lahs). The heelless velvet slipper in common use in the Philippines.
- cikapaton** (si-kap'-a-tohn'). A copper coin.
- cochero** (ko-chair'-oh). Coachman.

- copita** (ko-pee'-tah). Wine glass.
- cordillera** (kor-deel-yair'-ah). Mountain range.
- cuadrillero** (quad-reel-yair'-oh). A policeman during Spanish rule.
- dalaga** (dah-lah'-gah). Maiden.
- darawidao** (dah-rah-wee'-dow — the last syllable as in *endow*). A bird of the Philippines.
- datura**. A flowering plant.
- dita** (dee'-tah). A small tree.
- duende**. (doo'-en-dy). Fairy.
- duko** (duh'-ko). A coin worth a little more than one cent in United States money.
- feliz viajes** (fay-lees' vee-ah'-hees). Happy journeys.
- ganta** (gahn'-tah). A measure equal to about three quarts dry measure.
- gobernadorcillo** (go-bair'-na-dor-seel'-yoh). Literally, "little governor"; principal official in a town.
- goleta** (go-lay'-tah). A large sailing vessel.
- Guimó** (gheem-oh'). "Bill."
- hacendero** (ah-sen-dair'-oh). The owner of a plantation.
- hacienda** (ah-see-en'-dah). Plantation.
- hepos** (he'-puss). Be silent.
- Hinuptanan** (hin-oop-tah'-nahn). The bejeweled crocodile of folk-lore.
- hulat** (hoo-laht'). Wait.
- ilang-ilang** (ee'-lahng-ee'-lahng). A tree with very fragrant blossoms.
- ilahas** (ee-lah'-hahs). Jungle fowl.
- Inauayan** (in-ow-eye-ahn'). The name of a town.
- incoy-incoy** (in'-koy-in'-koy). A native dance.
- ipil** (ee'-pill). A beautiful cabinet wood.

jota-jota (ho'-tah-ho'-tah). A native dance.

Kabankuan (kah-bahn'-koo-ahn'). The name of an island.

kalubihan (ka-loo'-bee-hahn). A cocoanut grove.

kamera (ka'-me-rah). A small cabin on a boat.

Kag ang kabulahanan — Sang dughan ko. And the happiness — of my heart.

kokok (ko'-kok). The onomatopoetic name of a bird.

kris (krees). A dagger.

lacet (lah-kaht'). Make haste.

lanceros (lahn-sair'-os). An elaborate square dance.

lastima (lahs'-tee-mah). What a pity!

lianas (lee-ah'-nahs). Woody creepers.

lin-ti (lin-tih'). May the thunder blast it!

lorchas (lor'-chas). Two-masted sailing vessels for inter-island trade.

lulid (loo-lid'). Fat white-skinned supernatural beings who dwell underground.

madali (mah-dah-lee'). Hurry on.

madamo ñga salamat (mah-dah'-mo nga sah-lahm'-ah). Many thanks.

madre-cacao (mah'-dree-kah-kow'). A shrub.

managuete (man-a-ge'-ty — *g* as in *get*). The man who climbs the cocoanut palms to gather the sap or *tuba*.

mantio (man'-tee-oh). A supernatural being.

Masubu ang panumduman — Kay di pa niya nasayuran. His thoughts lay deep in gloom — For he did not understand.

Molang (mo-lahng'). A supernatural creature, spreader of disease.

muchacho (moo-chah'-cho). Boy; especially, house-boy.
mutia (moo'-tee-ah). Pearl.

nanai (nah'-nigh). Mamma.

Nadulang (nah-doo-lahng'). An island.

nipa (nee'-pah). A palm, the leaves of which are used for thatch.

Oko (o-ko'). A supernatural being.

palanga (pah-lahn-gah'). Favorite.

palay (pah-lye'). The unhusked rice.

para (pah'-rah). Stop.

parao (pah-row' — *ow* as in *how*). A light sailing craft balanced by means of outriggers.

peso (pay'-so). A coin worth half a dollar.

petate (pay-tah'-ty). A sleeping mat of woven grass.

pillo (peel'-yo). Mischievous, bad.

palma brava (pahl'-mah brah'-vah). A Philippine wood.

quilez (kee'-les). A two-wheeled closed vehicle with seats running lengthwise and entered by a door at the back.

quinque (kin'-kee). A tiny tin lamp without chimney or shade.

sak-ang (sahk-ahng'). A vine with edible roots.

sala (sah'-lah). Drawing-room.

salamat-po (sah-lahm'-aht-po). Thank you, sir.

sampaguita (sahm-pah-gee'-tah — *g* as in *gear*). A fragrant white flower.

sapat (sah'-paht). Creature.

sigbin (sig'-bin). A supernatural being.

sinamay (sin'-ah-my'). A cloth made of pineapple fibre and silk.

Si sin-o ang dira (see seen'-o ang dee-rah'). Who is there?

soroc (so-rohk'). The mushroom-shaped hat of the Filipinos.

Suta (soo'-tah). A supernatural being.

tampipi (tahm-pee'-pee). A large covered bamboo basket.

tao (tow — *ow* as in *how*). A peasant.

tatai (tah'-tie). Papa.

tienda (tee-en'-dah). A little shop.

tindalo (teen'-dah-lo'). A Philippine wood.

tok-mo (tohk'-mo). The sound which the pigeon makes.

toto (toh'-toh). Darling.

tuang-tuang (too-ahng'-too-ahng'). A long flat stick balanced on the shoulder. The load is suspended from the ends.

tuba (too'-bah). As soon as the flower-stalk of a coconut is beheaded, a liquid begins flowing from the severed end. When this liquid ferments it is called *tuba*.

usa (oo'-sah). Deer.

vara (vah'-rah). A measure of length, about thirty-three inches.

yawa (yah'-wah). Devil take it!

zacate (sah-kah'-ty). A forage grass.

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“Madamo nga salamat”

IF you were a young damsel bent on gypsy-
ing through the woods and fields you
loved—if moonlight thrilled you, and the
big out-of-doors called to you, and you
had a gayly painted van equipped with all
the essentials for a most delightful trip all
the way from Connecticut to the Florida
Everglades

BUT a moonstruck chap, handsome and all
that, but moonstruck—over you—persisted
in trailing along to annoy you with his
ludicrous wooing and protect you against
imaginary evils

What would you do?

AND if you were the moonstruck chap, heels
over heart in love with the distractingly
piquant heroine, and you knew the perils
were not imaginary

BUT that danger lurked in the merry green-
wood, and death hid beside the trail

What would you do?

If you were Philip you would tag along, humor-
ously persistent, enjoying the gracious moods of
vivacious Diane, ignoring her coldness—thwart-
ing the dimly sensed mysteries, the sudden dan-
gers, melting the heart—but tantalizing Diane
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